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# *The Dramas of Kalidasa*

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

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BY

Mrs. Bela D. B. A.

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To

*the Memory of my Mother  
of whose love and ten-  
derness, care and provi-  
dence, I have been depriv-  
ed early in my infancy.*



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## THE DRAMAS OF KALIDASA





## INTRODUCTION.

(In world's literature Kalidasa, poet and dramatist of ancient India, occupies an eminent position.) If mention be made of some of the greatest geniuses whose names are inscribed in letters of gold in the scroll of fame, one is sure to come across the name of Kalidasa.

True genius never fails to win appreciation. It is honoured in all countries. No wonder, therefore, that Indians have cherished with love and veneration the memory of Kalidasa and that the rest of the world too has paid handsome tributes of respect to his greatness. (His works have won the admiration of literary men both of the East and the West.) Banabhatta, the author of *Kadambari* says, "Like honey-laden flowers whom do not delight Kalidasa's sweet sayings and charming sentiments"? Jayadeva calls him "the prince of poets". A well-known Sanskrit couplet runs as follows : In the domain of poetry the drama is the most charming, among dramas *Shakuntala*, of it the fourth Act is the best, particularly four verses in it."

When his writings came to be known to European scholars through the labours of Sir William Jones, and then of Stenzler, Wilson and others, unstinted praise came to be showered upon them by eminent persons. Jones has called him the Indian Shakespeare. In M. Hippolyte Fauche's opinion the *Cloud Messenger* is without a rival in the elegiac literature of

the world. (Kalidasa's *Shakuntala* is justly acclaimed as a classic.) Goethe's appreciation is well known :

Wouldst thou the young year's blossoms and the fruits of its decline,  
And all by which the soul is charmed, enraptured, feasted, fed,  
Wouldst thou the earth and heaven itself in one name combine ?  
I name thee, O *Shakuntala* ! and all at once is said

Similar tributes have been paid to his greatness by other notable men. Thus von Humboldt has said, ("Kalidasa, the celebrated author of *Shakuntala*, is a masterly describer of the influence which Nature exercises upon the minds of lovers. Tenderness in the expression of feeling, richness of creative fancy, have assigned to him an eminent place among the poets of all nations.") No less handsome is the tribute paid by Schlegel who observes, "Among the Indians, the people from whom perhaps all the cultivation of the human race has been derived, plays were common long before they could have experienced any foreign influence. It has lately been made known to Europe that they have a dramatic literature which goes back to more than 2000 years. The only specimen of their plays hitherto known is the delightful *Shakuntala* which, notwithstanding the colouring of a foreign climate, bears in general structure a striking resemblance to our romantic drama." Similarly, of this drama Monier-Williams remarks, "No composition of Kalidasa displays more the richness of his poetical genius, the exuberance of his imagination, the warmth and play of his fancy, his professed knowledge of human heart, his delicate appreciation of its most refined and tender emotion, his familiarity with the workings and counter-workings of its conflicting feelings.—in short, entitles him to rank as the Shakespeare of India." Lassen calls Kalidasa "the brightest star in the firmament of Indian poetry."

Nothing can be finer than his portrayal of character, speci-

ally that of women, or more striking than the tone of purity that pervades his dramas, or more charming than the melody of his verses. He set up for dramas a standard which all good writers have followed and which has remained unchanged ever since. Yet it is a curious commentary on the sad neglect into which he has been allowed to fall that no complete translation of his works in English in a handy form is available to-day. Over a century ago some of his books were translated into English, French and German which carried the literary world by storm. But these translations are now to be found only in libraries, museums, bibliothecas. We Indians have reasons to be grateful to the pioneers for the compliment paid to India and to the brightest genius in Sanskrit literature. It is, however, nothing short of a scandal that we, sons and daughters of India, have not followed up their efforts and sought to keep the names of our eminent literary men alive. Whether it is the will or the scholarship that is lacking one cannot say. This modest volume is the outcome of the former, its deficiency in the latter will be patent even to the casual reader and for it the translator craves his indulgence.

This volume contains translations of the three dramas of Kalidasa that have come down to us. Whether he actually wrote any more none to-day is in a position to say. *Abhigana—Shakuntala* or *Shakuntala* and the *Token* is the brightest gem of Sanskrit dramas. Its beauty and charm are indescribable. It is based on a story given in the first book of the *Mahabharata*, though Kalidasa has preferred to follow the version given in the *Padma Purana*. But "the traces of borrowings are in the pattern, not in the stuff". So doubtful is the chronology of writers in Sanskrit that scholars are not wanting who assert that the *Padma Purana* was composed after the play of *Shakuntala* had been written. One can appreciate the true greatness of Kalidasa as a dramatist by comparing his

drama with the original story in the Mahabharata. In *Vikramorvashi* or *Vikrama* and *Urvashi* (strictly speaking, it should be called *Urvashi won by Prowess or Valour*) we have a picture at once of the highest ecstasy and the deepest frenzy of love. We find the hero sacrifice his duty, character nobility and almost even his life at the altar of love. He relegates to the cold shade of neglect his duteous and virtuous, queen to win the favour of a celestial nymph. The contrast between the king and the queen is striking. The queen is the very picture of self-effacement while the king is that of self-indulgence. In *Malavikagnimitra* or *Malavika* and *Agnimitra* the hero, a king, is an admirer of external beauty. He marries a pretty dancing girl, an attendant of the queen, then again stoops to conquer another waiting maid. Love to him too thus means the gratification of self. (The dramatist has not presented us in any of his works with heroes, or even heroines for the matter of that, whose love triumphs over the senses, elevates thoughts, purifies the soul, casts a halo on surroundings and on society at large. The love which surges in their hearts is the outcome of blind passion which like a tempest sweeps them off their feet, drives them crazy, makes them neglect their duties and even forget their own selves. In his dramas there is love but not love coupled with restraint.) Far different is the love or devotion portrayed by him in his poem, the Birth of Kumara, namely that of Uma for Shiva or of Sita for Rama in the Line of Raghu. Their love is free from the taint of sensuality. There are, however, in his dramas some beautiful pictures of noble feminine devotion but his heroes are passionate in the extreme. It is not intended to blame the author. The fault did not lie with him. His heroes are kings. He portrayed society as he found it. Fortunately, the drama of ancient society has been played out, its morality and traditions have become obsolete.

In his dramas there is far too much of love and love-making and too little of anything else. The attempt made to make out the kings as ideal rulers or valiant fighters is too weak and signally fails to produce the desired effect. Speaking of French dramatic literature of the time of Moliere and Racine Prof. Saintsbury observès, there "was the too great individualizing of one point in a character, and the making the man or the woman nothing but a blunderer, a lover, a coxcomb, a tyrant, and the like... The complexity of human character is ignored. This fault distinguishes both Moliere and Racine from writers of the very highest order and in especial it distinguishes the comedy of Moliere and the tragedy of Racine from the comedy and tragedy of Shakespeare". Unfortunately, Kalidasa's dramas suffer from this defect. There is too great an insistence on love in them and too little mention is made of any other trait in the character of the heroes.

The central theme of all the three dramas then is love. Shakespeare has traversed the whole gamut of human feelings and sentiments.\* Kalidasa's range of passions and characters is limited. He has harped on one note only. But, subject to this limitation, how exquisitely sweet is his touch, how varied the notes ! From the first sprouting of love in the heart, as yet undetected, to the final frenzy of despair at the parting of the lovers he has with a masterly touch delineated all the phases of love in the three dramas, yet differently in each. There is no weariness, no monotony, though in all of them he dwells on love, frothy and ebullient at first but ending in happy marriage at last. In each case a prince, an egoist of pleasure, already married comes across a pretty girl, falls a victim to her charm and marries her. Yet the sense of sameness does not oppress us. In *Malavika* and *Agnimitra* the queens play an important role, their mutual jealousies lead to the development of the plot, while the heroine, an abigail, whom the king

ultimately marries, is left more or less in the shade. In Vikrama and Urvashi the queen does not come into prominence. All the same we find her devotion rewarded by the king going into raptures of love over a celestial hetaira! In Shakuntala the queen takes no part in the action of the drama. Our attention from the beginning to the end is riveted on the central figure. She needs no foil to set off her beauty. Yet here too a mistress of the king, as lawyers would say, "volunteers" to sing a mournful ditty whose burden is that constancy is a virtue that cannot be expected from a king. He is like a bee that sips honey from flower to flower. True, there is no palace intrigue as in Malavika and Agnimitra to retain or win the love of the king, no conspiracy to ruin a successful rival, but enough has been said to show that a queen has no right to the king's whole heart, the king has no obligation towards the queen beyond the observance of external decorum. (In all these dramas Kalidasa has shown the baneful effect of polygamy on the minds of the wives, the misery and desolation which blasted the lives of these unfortunate victims of a vicious social system. Rich men indulged in the luxury of having more than one wife, but the lot of the poor discarded wives they did not stop to consider, this Kālidasa has shown up in his plays.)

Two factors more than anything else have contributed to the success of Kalidasa's dramas, namely, the delineation of character and the development of the plot. With regard to the first it should be noticed that no two characters are alike. To secure this end the poet has to modify the stories from their originals. The kings and queens are all distinguishable, their companions and servants similarly are at once universal and individual, no two sages or jesters are exactly alike. Kalidasa has often introduced characters in pairs just to show how different they yet are from each other; how each acts and talks according to his or her nature or character and how the

peculiar trait of each can be discovered from his or her words. It is in characterisation, indeed, that Kalidasa displays the highest skill. He is equally happy in describing the characters of kings and of fishermen. His characters arrest the imagination, are consistent with their conduct and with their role in the play. How well-chiselled like Grecian sculpture are the portraits in the the dramas, be they of sages or of servantmaids! How perfectly natural are their behaviour! He has given us elaborate and subtle pictures of human character all true to life yet all distinct. His heroes are valiant fighters, good rulers, estimable characters and perfectly moral judged by the standard of those days. It is essential to bear this qualification in mind, otherwise their habit of falling in love at first sight whenever they come across a pretty girl would appear as a vicious propensity. Polygamy, which society then tolerated, appears to cast a dark shadow on the principal characters of each of the plays. It is impossible to sympathise to-day with the love-adventures or the passionate outbursts of love of a much married man. This one fact is not sufficient to stamp the heroes as cheap or commonplace but makes one painfully conscious of the fact that we are reading of incidents of other times when other manners prevailed. Kalidasa, however, is extremely felicitous in his portrayal of the character of women, and it is clear that he entertained a lofty opinion of their virtue and their honour. They are singularly chaste, graceful, delicate, tender and touching. They are creations of undying merit. The characters of Shakuntala and of Aushinari are unsurpassed in Sanskrit dramatic literature. |

It is in his portrayal of character, as has been pointed out by a Bengali writer, that one sees what a close student of human nature Kalidasa is. To take one instance only from the least perfect of his productions, namely, the appearance of Malavika on the stage, we find she makes a timid approach at



first, so much so that her teacher feels constrained to tell her not to be nervous. Did she know the stakes for which she was playing, that her whole future depended on the ordeal of that day? Or, why should a *danseuse* feel nervous in appearing before the king? She knew she was to have been married to the king, but that prospect had vanished with the arrest of her brother. Did she, all the same, cling to that hope, follow that chimera and feel that she could yet be the architect of her own fortune? It was a day of trial for her. She stood face to face with the king not as a welcome bride but as a dancer only, as a waiting-maid in the palace which she would have adorned as the queen. Disappointment and mortification choked her. The king, on the other hand, was jubilant, found her to be, in fact, fairer than she looked in the picture. Then she sang. Hope and despair were inextricably blended in that passionate note of the plaintive soul. She entertained in her heart a lofty ambition but, situate as she was, she could only exclaim, "I am not free, do not appear as a king's daughter but as your slave"—and what state of man or of woman can be worse and more pitiable than that of subjection! After singing the song in which she professed her love for the king and the impossibility of its fulfilment she heaved a sigh of relief. Just this one song was enough to give vent to her pent up feelings. She felt inclined to depart. She had shot her bolt, whether it would hit the mark or not time alone would show. The king must have noticed the painful expression on Malavika's face as she sang the song, but the Jester kept her waiting, for he wanted the king to see how she looked with a beaming smile on her countenance. A faint trace of a smile appeared on her face at an observation of the Jester which rose to a titter and lit up the whole face at another observation of his. The queen pretended not to like these developments because of their psychological effect on the

king's mind. But how deftly does the dramatist introduce them and weave them into the web of the story ! The touch of the masterhand is clearly discernible in innumerable significant details like these. A

As regards the development of the plot, it may safely be said that not a single line has been penned, not a single incident has been introduced by Kalidasa in any of his dramas, which has no bearing on the central theme of his story. The unity of action has been strictly observed. He is never unnecessarily prolix, he doesn't believe in overlaying the plays with minor episodes, there is no underplot in any of his dramas. So there is nothing in the plays to divert the reader's attention from the central theme "which is developed naturally out of the few incidents necessary to clothe his characters with an air of reality" or to further the movement of the action. (A bee darting out of a flower-bed and hanging over Shakuntala's face, the quarrel over the watering of the plants, the curse of Durvasa, in the first Act of Shakuntala, are not only striking as giving a natural colouring to the scene but are highly dramatic in the sense that they further the development of the action.) Kalidasa did not invent his plots, Shakespeare too did not, but in his treatment of the subjects he displays much originality. He shows equally great skill in his power of delineating character as well as in that of inventing incidents. The unities of time and place are not necessary to be observed in Sanskrit dramas, so Kalidasa or Bhavabhuti has not observed them. Thus, in Shakuntala the heroine spends five years in heaven, in the Later Life Story of Rama twelve years elapse between the first and the second Acts. Unity of place also is not observed : the scene shifts from earth to heaven and then back to the earth in several Sanskrit dramas.

| One merit of Kalidasa's writings is his power of laying down universal propositions, i.e., making a generalisation.

from a particular instance before him which is true for all time and for all clime. Thus, hermits look like sun-glass, riches do not make good men proud, ever sweet is their nature, hermits feel confined in towns, its atmosphere stuffy, life fettered: the grief of all concerned at Shakuntala's departure from the hermitage would find an echo in the heart of every parent who has given his or her daughter away in marriage, clandestine marriages bring nemesis in their train unless one proceeds warily, are some illustrations taken at random from one of his plays only. In his poem, the Cloud Messenger, many such generalisations may be seen. साधारणीकरण

Then again, Kalidasa was not only a dramatist but also a poet. He was moreover a poet whose heart was full of love of Nature. Of him may perhaps also be said what Mill has said of Wordsworth, his works "expressed not mere outward beauty, but states of feeling, and of thought coloured by feeling, under the excitement of beauty." Nature means to him something more than a convenient source of embellishment for his poetry as it did to English poets who came after Pope. On the other hand, the contemplation of Nature was a never failing source of elevating joy to him. Many of the verses in the dramas are such as only a first rate poet like him could have penned: Shakuntala's faultless form is like flower that is unsmelt, she is tender like a jasmine flower, her arms are delicate like slender new green twigs, like fresh buds midst green leaves who is this girl asks the hero when he sees Shakuntala approach him, are only a few instances out of many. Several of his poems in these dramas are perfect little gems. He goes even further and says that the whole inanimate world and the lower order of animate creation sympathise with human feelings, feel sorry when men and women are unhappy, delighted when they are happy. Shakuntala's departure from the hermitage is approved by the trees and the

animal world, peacocks don't dance, the deer throw off *krusha* grass, twigs shed leaves, they seem to shed tears when she leaves the hermitage. When the king prohibited the spring festival in sympathy with his feelings cuckoos refrained from singing and flowers from blossoming. Does Kalidasa express his own love of Nature when he makes Shakuntala declare, "I might forget myself when I forget this creeper, I love this creeper as my sister," words strangely reminiscent of St. Francis' love and tenderness for flowers. Nor was he void of love for the lower order of creation if Shakuntala's love for *chakravakas*, does and fawns, be taken as an index of his own.

The observations on this point of a great poet himself, namely Tagore, will certainly interest the readers. He says "Shakuntala is a part of the hermitage. Remove the hermitage, you spoil Shakuntala's character. The light and shade, breeze and flowers, trees and creepers, deer and birds, are intimately connected with her. Her whole being has been moulded by Nature herself (as was Lucy's). (Nature is not something external to Shakuntala but is part and parcel of her being. The connection between her and Nature is seen in the parting scene from the hermitage.) (The two have become intimately blended and have built up a harmonious whole.) She appears before us as the very impersonation of the hermitage. She didn't drink water without first watering the plants. She wouldn't pluck a flower to adorn her person much as she loved to do so. (She was, indeed, one of the flowers of the hermitage, or, it may be said that the hermitage figures as a character in the drama like Kanva or Priyambada. No other poet or dramatist has treated Nature in this fashion. Thus he anticipated Wordsworth by well over a thousand years. Bhavabhuti has tried to imitate him in this respect.)"

There are certain elements in the dramas which strike

modern readers as somewhat bizarre, such as voices from heaven, journeys to heaven, curses of sages, fall of nymphs, etc. These, however, appeared to be perfectly natural to men and women of Kalidasa's day whose intellectual pabulum was supplied by the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. However odd they might be, they are not such as to alienate the intellectual or moral sympathies of his readers. Moreover, in *Shakuntala*, "a dramatic idyll of surpassing beauty and, in the opinion of the highest authorities," as Prof. Ward observes, "one of the masterpieces of the poetic literature of the world", one cannot help feeling that the heroine should not have succumbed so easily to the blandishments of the hero. But then, as the poet himself has said, one defect is easily hid as the stain on the moon by her bright light. Then again, this abandonment of self in her affections is the main source of our interest in the drama, as it makes us feel that the hero and heroine are not supernatural beings but men and women of flesh and blood and so suffer from the weakness that flesh is heir to. A simple, unsophisticated girl, brought up in a hermitage, innocent and unsuspecting, it was perhaps natural for her to make an absolute surrender of her self when the king of the land was wooing her. Or, Kalidasa might have thought that such conduct was but natural for the daughter of Menaka. Lastly, it might be, that the drama is a condemnation of secret marriages then in vogue, otherwise, it is impossible to conceive why, when the old sage tacitly approves of *Shakuntala's* marriage, his youthful disciples should indulge in a tirade against hasty, ill-considered, clandestine marriages. By his condemnation of such marriages, as also of the practice of polygamy, Kalidasa may well be looked upon as one of the earliest champions of the woman's cause seeking to right the wrong done to the women of this country by Manu and others.

There is no doubt that Kalidasa has vastly improved upon

the episode of Shakuntala as given in the Mahabharata. The sensual monarch of the epic, as has been pointed out by a Bengali scholar, has been transformed into a king endowed with real dignity. The stain on his character, his clandestine marriage with Shakuntala without waiting for the consent of his guardian, is redeemed by voice from heaven and approved by sages of earth and heaven. Though a fierce passion burns in his heart king Dushyanta does not yet lose his self-possession. He duly weighs and ponders whether he can marry Shakuntala, and when he finds he can, minor obstacles like consent of guardians, *etc.*, are swept away by the irresistible torrent of passion. His conduct in rejecting Shakuntala, nay in refusing even to look at her, when he fails to recognise her as his wife, is highly praiseworthy. What one fails to understand is the outburst of ungovernable passion at the first sight of Shakuntala when he had already a queen and a mistress. It strikes one as highly melodramatic and reminds one of Johnson's observation about a woman weeping for the death of her third husband ! Shakuntala's character too is improved out of recognition. She is not the garrulous, irate, impudent girl of the Mahabharata but we are struck by her modesty, her short, sweet and simple words. She has been purged of all her grossness and thus transformed into a creature of transcendent beauty. The moral tone of the drama is striking. It is full of precepts enjoining respect for gods and *brahmanas*, observance of duty, forgiveness, self-abnegation, self-control. The king when sharply addressed by Gautami or the disciples indulges in no harsh recrimination. A few hot words escape Shakuntala's lips when she fails to win her husband's recognition and her heart is about to break as she feels humiliated and insulted by the king's observations. Kalidasa has succeeded in imprinting on his readers' minds certain lofty moral principles without being plainly didactic.

Tagore has thus moralised on the play of Shakuntala : Kalidasa has placed before us pictures, not only of a life of enjoyment but also of a renunciation. He might have stopped with the finding of the ring by the fishermen and the king's repentance at having turned his lawfully wedded wife away. He has not done so in order to show that there is something higher than a marriage which is the result of a fierce flame of passion burning in the heart, that external beauty is a shaky foundation for basing on it a happy union. He has shown that a heavy curse lies on a marriage which is the outcome of blind passion. The beauty of Shakuntala failed to win recognition from her husband at the palace, that of Uma, in the Birth of Kumara, could not save Cupid from being reduced to ashes. The maddening influence of passion is but momentary, it is soon followed by listlessness, repentance and forgetfulness. In Shakuntala he has shown that youth, beauty, pretty friends, fine groves, made the king blind with passion but failed to bring about a happy union such as was brought about by a plain boy in another hermitage free from such adornments. In both the poem, the Birth of Kumara, and in this drama, Kalidasa has shown that what infatuation fails to achieve bliss or beneficence does, that beauty born of virtue is true beauty, just as love, sober and restrained, is the highest love. "Love which is centred in self is neither lasting nor admirable, but is both love which embraces children, friends and relations along with the husband or wife. Such love can be attained only by self-control and penance, it is based on renunciation, blessed by sorrow, fortified by virtue." It is like an unfathomable well whose water never overflows. The drama of Shakuntala shows union of two kinds—one of the earth, frail and flashy, the other of heaven, peaceful and permanent. It also shows that in the dispensation of Providence even sin has its utility, may be productive of beneficent result, for it

renders possible the redemption of a fickle or faithless lover.

Long ago the celebrated Bengali novelist, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, pointed out that Shakuntala partook of the character partly of Miranda and partly of Desdemona. She has all the natural simplicity of heart of Miranda, they are brought up under similar circumstances, both meet with their lovers accidentally, both are admired in similar strains. Ferdinand's words.

but you, O you  
So perfect and so peerless, are created  
Of every creature's best !

are but a faint echo of Dushyanta's fulsome eulogy of Shakuntala's beauty. But they differ in one respect. Miranda is frank and open. In unburdening her soul to Ferdinand or to Prospero she feels no trace of shyness, while Shakuntala locks up her love in the secret recess of her heart and only discloses it to her friends when she is ill and that after being much pressed. Shakuntala resembles Desdemona in marrying without waiting for his father's consent and this secret marriage threatened to be almost as tragic as the marriage of Desdemona actually was. Desdemona has not a harsh word to say about her husband even on her deathbed, Shakuntala shows just a trifle less self-restraint. It has been said that society has an interest in the marriages of the members of the community. Marriage is a social and not purely a personal affair. Society accordingly condemns hasty, ill-considered or clandestine marriages. Durvasa in the drama typifies society, his curse is the curse of society on the secret marriage of Shakuntala. Here again Tagore says that Kalidasa has let Shakuntala act according to her will and at the same time made her self-restrained. No artificial rules of society fetter



her, yet virtue imposes a severe restraint on her. Even the form of her marriage shows the union of two forces. She wanders on the border-line of freedom and restraint. Here lies the difference between Miranda and Shakuntala. Miranda is the child of discipline, she had no friends, no companion save her father. Shakuntala had two friends of the same age. Miranda's simple nature was the result of ignorance but Shakuntala's of lack of experience. Shakuntala's simplicity of nature led to her fall—for a time—but redeemed her ever after. Miranda was not a part of the island in which she was brought up. Her nature had not fixed its roots in the soil of the island, with the hills or the sea she held no communion, had no connection. We see a lovely island as the scene of action but it is not reflected in and through the heroine's nature. It is part of the drama, not of her character. This is not true of Shakuntala. She is part of the hermitage.

With regard to the literary style of Kalidasa's writings a professor of Sanskrit of Elphinstone College, Bombay, in his edition of Shakuntala has made certain observations which are so apt and apposite that I take the liberty to reproduce them here (with slight additions): Kalidasa is always at home in his subject. He is never at a loss for a suitable word or expression to convey his meaning. He wields a facile pen and possesses complete control over the language. Laboured and elaborate constructions are prominent by their absence. His style is easy and flowing and never shows conscious meditation or effort, or even subsequent improvement, its beauty appears careless and natural. His expression is lucid, conveying his meaning in direct and competent terms. He can be virile, felicitous, vivid, and if his sweetness sometimes cloy, he has a depth of feeling which lifts his dramas to the level of poetry.

Another feature of his style is that it is so concise. He

never uses more words than are absolutely necessary. His sentences are always brief and pithy and exhibit a delicate equilibrium in structure. His peculiarity is to suggest much more than what he expresses. Another peculiarity of his is that he shows a fine sense of propriety in the selection of a suitable style for his various characters. He is master of a variety of styles which he appropriately displays as occasion arises. His skill lies in adapting a particular style to a particular character. His characters use short, pithy sentences, exactly like those that people use in their ordinary life. His words are sweet, composition is graceful, language easy, clear, flowing. The simplicity and elegance of his diction render his dramas literary achievements of the highest order. His fine taste preserves him from the affectation of special tricks of style such as, artificialities of construction, punning subtleties and jingling assonances of sounds, that form at once the strength and the weakness of some of the later writers. It is marked also by the absence of long compounds, involved constructions and overwrought rhetoric. His diction is pure and chaste, smooth and graceful, polished and well-balanced, and the choice of words is happy and often extremely felicitous. Nor does the imaginative power of the dramatist fall short of the consummate skill of the literary artist. His greatness in the use of generalisations is remarkable as also in the use of similes unparalleled for their beauty and appropriateness. Kalidasa has enriched the Sanskrit language, as Shakespeare and Pope the English language, with more quotable lines and expressions than any other single author. These felicities of thoughts and expressions have given his dramas an eminent place in dramatic literature.

If from a study of the dramatist's art, as displayed in his works, one seeks to know something about the man who conceived it and called it to life, one finds oneself wholly at sea.

So little is known of him. No one can say when or where he was born. His private life is a blank to us. Barring a few apocryphal stories nothing is known of him. Was his own life tossed by the tempest or whirlwind of passion? Was he a purist far in advance of his age who condemned polygamy, who condemned secret marriages and who entertained a lofty ideal of marriage? Was he the champion of an opposition, the apostle of a new order? What was his homelife like? Was it well-balanced? How did he develop such a fine artistic sense? Who were his friends and contemporaries? Whence arose his partiality for Ujjaini? How did he come to acquire such a wonderfully accurate knowledge of topography, geography and astronomy? Does the conquering expedition of Raghu represent that of some monarch of his day? Did he live in an age of renaissance when "the latent possibilities of (Indian) genius were stirred as by the coming of a new springtime, fresh powers of imagination were seeking to assert themselves in the dry atmosphere of philosophic realism"? These are questions we might ask but alas! cannot answer. The key is missing which will unlock the door of knowledge and furnish us with the information we seek. From the vivid picture, however, presented in his works one gets an impression that he lived in one of the flourishing and expansive eras of Indian history when national life was pulsating with vigour, abounding with energy, full of vitality, and "the life of individuals was rich, manifold and full of a sense of enjoyment". What a fine picture of a high level of general culture do we get in these dramas! There is no harping on the virtue of resignation, no enunciation of the creed of passiveness, no meek submission to fate. On the contrary, his creations are men and women of action who always strive to achieve their ends even though pitched against heavy odds, who display courage, perseverance and resolution,

whose will is not undermined when confronted with difficulties. Brave sons and daughters of India ! Happy India !

Finally, I may be permitted to say one word about the volume itself. I have attempted to make my rendering as faithful to the original as possible. Except certain passages here and there very little has been left out while nothing has been wilfully added. I have been content to let Kalidasa speak in the simplest words possible as he himself has done in his Sanskrit writings. I am painfully conscious of my own limitations in my attempt to convey in a foreign tongue the sense of a first rate dramatist written in a language which is no longer current. If I have succeeded in making myself intelligible I shall feel my labours to be amply rewarded. Besides the writers mentioned by name my best thanks are also due to Pundit Rajendra Chandra Vidyabushan's and to Prof. A.B. Gajendragadkar's learned discourses on Kalidasa in their works. I have freely drawn from them in writing this Introduction. Lastly, it would be the height of ingratitude on my part not to acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. S. K. Sen Gupta M. A. Ph. D. (Leeds) for carefully going through a part of the manuscript of this volume and making some helpful suggestions. If in spite of his revision there be defects in this volume they must be due to the taint of the original sin in the translation.

*Calcutta,  
July 1, 1945.*

BELA BOSE.

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

### MALES.

DURVASA	.. .. .	A sage
DUSHYANTA	..	King of Hastinapura, the <i>hero</i> .
GALAVA	..	A pupil in Marichi's hermitage.
GAUTAMA	..	A hermit youth in Kanva's hermitage.
JANUKA	.. .. .	A city-guard.
KANVA, or }	..	A sage, foster-father of Shakuntala.
KASHYAPA }	..	
KARABAKA	..	A servant of Dushyanta's mother.
MADHAVYA	..	The Jester, king's companion.
MARICHI	..	Husband of Aditi or Dakshayani, a sage.
MATALI	.. .. .	Charioteer of Indra.
MITRAVASU	..	The Superintendent of the City Police.
NARADA	..	A hermit boy of Kanva's hermitage.
RAIVATAKA	.. .. .	A janitor.
SARVADAMANA	..	Son of Dushyanta and Shakuntala.
SHARADVATA	.. .. .	Disciple of Kanva.
SHARANGARAVA	.. .. .	Disciple of Kanva.
SOMARATA	..	Priest in royal household.
SUCHAKA	.. .. .	A city-guard.
VATAYANA	.. .. .	The Chamberlain
The General of the Army, Stage Manager, Hermit-youths, &c.		

### FEMALES.

ADITI	.. .. .	Wife of Marichi.
ANASUYA	.. .. .	Companion of Shakuntala.
CHATURIKA	..	A maidservant of the palace.
GAUTAMI	..	A matron of Kanva's hermitage.
MADHUKARIKA	.. .. .	A maidservant.
PARABHATRIKA	.. .. .	A maidservant.
PRIYAMBADA	..	Companion of Shakuntala.
SANUMATI	..	A celestial nymph, friend of Menaka.
SHAKUNTALA	..	Daughter of Vishvamitra and Menaka, the <i>heroine</i> .
SUVRATA	..	A woman ascetic of Marichi's hermitage.
VETRAVATI	.. .. .	Female door-keeper.
Actress, Women ascetics. &c.		

### PERSONS MENTIONED.

HAMSAPADIKA	..	A sweetheart of the king.
MENAKA	..	A celestial nymph, mother of Shakuntala.
NARADA	.. .. .	A hermit boy.
PISHUNA	..	Minister of Dushyanta.
TARALIKA	..	Queen Vasumati's maidservant.
VASUMATI	.. .. .	The Queen.
VRIDDHASHAKALYA	..	An inmate of Marichi's hermitage.

## SHAKUNTALA

The play begins with the usual Prologue containing a dialogue between the Stage Manager and an actress introducing the play to the audience. The first Act at the very opening presents a striking scene to the eye, namely, that of the king out hunting in his chariot in hot pursuit of an antelope arriving in the vicinity of a quiet hermitage. No less charming is the scene which follows, namely, that of the hermitage itself, which the king enters on the invitation of some hermits, and of its inmates, three girls of equal age and beauty, watering plants and familiarly conversing with one another. The beauty of one particularly surpasses even that of palace girls. Her body is enchanting like a bunch of flowers. A bee hovering over her face disturbs her. This gives the king an opportunity to have a good look at her and also an excuse for appearing before her. Struck by her exquisite beauty the king falls in love with her at once. In the course of conversation with her friends he gathers that there is no bar to his union with her and that the sage, who happens to be away at the time, is agreeable to her marriage as soon as a suitable suitor is obtained.

In the next Act the king mentions his love affair to his friend and confidant, the Jester, stops hunting, in fact sends the party with the Jester away on the summons of his mother, but himself stays on, on the pretext of protecting the hermitage from the incursions of demons. In the third Act Shakuntala reluctantly discloses to her friend that she is in love with the king, that this love has risen to fever heat and distresses her sorely. Then the king suddenly appears before her on hearing of a love-letter drafted by her, when her friends discreetly retire. He presses his suit with all the ardour of an infatuated lover and persuades her to marry him in *gandharva* form, to which he assures her the sage will not object.

In the fourth Act one definitely learns that Shakuntala has

been secretly married to Dushyanta according to *gandharva* rites to the apprehension and delight of her two friends. The king has left for his palace promising to send for Shakuntala immediately on his arrival there. She is in a delicate state and having no news of him is distracted. Then nemesis overtakes her hasty and clandestine marriage. Sage Durvasa comes to the hermitage but his arrival is not noticed by her. He curses her but when appeased partially relents. Sage Kanva returns, is informed of Shakuntala's marriage, decides to send her to the king. He gives a few words of advice to her as also of instructions to his disciples who are to accompany her, words elevated and dignified withal so simple as to betoken a pure and a noble character. Shakuntala prepares to go, but finds it difficult to part as she has become part and parcel of the hermitage itself. Tears moisten the eyes of all, even Nature and the lower order of creation are affected at her departure as also is the staid old sage.

The fifth Act shows the effect of Durvasa's curse and the consequent lapse of memory on the part of the king. His moral nature disinclines him even to have a look at the handsome girl who presents herself in royal court and could not produce the ring which was lost. In spite of the earnest requests and persuasions of her friends he declines to accept her as his wife. She is left behind by the party which retires but she mysteriously disappears. In the sixth Act two fishermen with the ring presented by the king to Shakuntala are taken to the palace. The king is at once reminded of his marriage at the sight of the ring and feels highly disconsolate at her loss. A celestial nymph, unknown to the king, watches his demonstrations of grief. The king is summoned by Indra to fight some demons in heaven. The play closes in the next Act with the reunion of the lovers following an accidental meeting of the king with his son on his way back from heaven.

# SHAKUNTALA

## OR

### THE LOST TOKEN.

#### ACT 1.

King Dushyanta chasing an antelope comes close to a hermitage and is invited by the hermits to pay a visit to it. As he goes in he listens to three girls talking together and sees them watering plants. He is struck by the beauty of one of them, namely, that of Shakuntala. He approaches them, is hospitably received by them, and makes inquiries about her. She presents her with a ring of his and retires but leaves his heart behind.

#### PROLOGUE.

May protect you Shiva in eight forms Who's known after  
His creations in this our world, first as water ;  
As fire, carrying oblations properly made ;  
As priest, by whom sacrifices 'fore gods are laid ;  
As the sun and moon which regulate time on earth ;  
Ether, spread through universe, which to sound gives birth ;  
As earth, the source of all things which th' universe fill ;  
Or last, as air, which in beings all life does instil.

*At the end of the benediction.*

MANAGER. *Looking towards the tiring room.* My lady, if you are dressed come here.

ACTRESS. My lord ! Here I am, be pleased to order, sir, what duty is to be executed.

MANAGER. Madam, before this assembly of learned and discerning men let a new drama, Abhignana—Shakuntala, the plot of which has been knit together by Kalidasa, be staged. Bestow special care on each character of the play.



ACTRESS. Thanks to your excellent arrangement, sir, you will find nothing at all will be wanting.

MANAGER. Gentle lady, I tell you the true state of the case,

A play's deemed good th' learned when acclaim it and bless,  
Actors, howe'er trained, are dubious of their success.

ACTRESS. That is so, no doubt. Then what's to be done?

MANAGER. With the music of your voice regale the ears of the audience.

ACTRESS. About what season shall I sing?

MANAGER. Why not sing of the summer season just set in and which is so enjoyable,

Dip in water's when so pleasant,  
Sylvan breeze is charming, fragrant  
From its contact with *patala* flowers,  
Quite delightful are the bowers  
Thickly shaded, at the day's close  
Bring sleep and conduce to repose.

ACTRESS. Very well. *Sings.*

By bees kissed the delicate *sirisa* flowers  
Tenderly do women put on their ears.

MANAGER. Bravo, madam! Behold, the thrilled audience looks like a painted picture, ears of the listeners are riveted to the melody of your voice. Now, what drama should we enact?

ACTRESS. You revered sir said just now a new drama *Abhignana-Shakuntala* should be enacted.

MANAGER. Madam, I am well reminded. I forgot it at this moment.

Your sweet music drew me afar,  
As now *Dushyanta* is drawn by deer;

*Exeunt both.*

END OF THE PROLOGUE.

KING. *Joyfully.* Really, my horses beat those of Indra  
or of the sun in speed :

Things first small to sight soon big appear,  
As joined what disjointed were ere,  
What is crooked looks straight to eyes,  
Nothing for a moment now lies  
At a distance or by my side,  
With such speed does chariot glide.

Charioteer, now look, I am going to kill it. *Fits an  
arrow and aims. Behind the scenes. A voice.* Ho ! Ho !  
King ! The deer belongs to the hermitage. It should not be  
killed, should not be killed.

CHARIOTEER. *Listening and looking.* Long-lived one !  
Hermits stand within the arrow's range between you and the  
antelope.

KING. *Agitated.* Stop the horses.

CHARIOTEER. As your Majesty commands. *Stops Chariot.*

*Enter A HERMIT with two pupils.*

HERMIT. *Raising his hand.* King, this antelope belongs  
to the hermitage. It should not be killed, should not be killed.

On the tender frame of the deer shouldn't graft,  
Like fire on a heap of cotton, your shaft,  
How frail, alas, is the life of this game !  
And your pointed shaft like thunder's sharp th' same.  
Pray withhold your weapon, it's well-aimed sire,  
It should hit the wicked, th' innocent spare.

KING. Well, I will withdraw the arrow. *Does so.*

HERMIT. That is worthy of you, the light of the race of  
Puru. May you have a son endowed with every virtue who  
will be a king of kings even !

PUPILS. *Raising hands.* May your son be an emperor !

KING. *Bowing.* I gratefully accept your blessings.

*Enter KING in a chariot holding a bow and arrow pursuing an antelope attended by his CHARIOTEER.*

CHARIOTEER. *Looking at the king and at the antelope.*  
O long-lived one !

Casting my eye on th' black spotted antelope here  
And you with bow-string, seems Pinakin chases the deer.

KING. Charioteer, we have been drawn far away by  
this antelope, again even now it

To th' pursuing chariot turns its glance  
And its neck with grace, as for life does prance,  
Hind-half draws in forepart of frame from fear  
Of my pointed arrows' fall on its rear,  
With chewed grass dropped from mouth track does cover  
Scarce treads the earth as it bounds in the air.

*With surprise.* How now it is visible with difficulty hotly  
pursued by me.

CHARIOTEER. O long-lived one ! The reins are drawn in,  
the speed of the chariot is slackened as the ground is uneven,  
so the antelope has got ahead of us : now that we are on level  
ground again we shall soon come up with it.

KING. Relax the reins then.

CHARIOTEER. As the long-lived one commands. *Representing the speed of chariot.* Long-lived one, look, look !

Reins are slackened horses how fast they career,  
Seem impatient of the speed of the deer,  
Foreparts of their bodies they stretch out, lo !  
Dust raised is left behind so fast they go.  
The tips of their earflutes are now at rest  
As the ears are steady also quite erect.

HERMIT. King, we are out to fetch fuel. Yonder, on  
the bank of the Malini you see the hermitage of Kanva, the

great sage. If it do not interfere with your other duties you may go and accept the hospitality of the sage. Moreover, You will see how hermits go through rites from impediment free, How your arms, marked with the scars of bowstring, them protect you'll see.

KING. Is the lord of sages here ?

HERMIT. He has ordered his daughter Shakuntala to offer hospitality to guests, while he has gone to Somatirtha to propitiate her adverse fate.

KING. Well, I shall see her. She will surely mention my visit to the sage whose devotion is well known.

HERMIT. We are off. *Walks away with pupils.*

KING. Charioteer, urge on the horses. Let us purge ourselves of our sins by a sight of the hermitage.

CHARIOTEER. As the long-lived one commands. *Again gesticulates the speed of chariot.*

KING. *Looking around.* Charioteer, even if we were not told we would have known it as an expanse of the sacred grove.

CHARIOTEER. How ?

KING. Don't you see ? For here,  
Grains lie 'neath trees dropped from mouths of hollows in  
which parrots dwell,  
Crackers of *ingudi* fruits, polished stone slabs, see are  
smeared with oil,  
Noise of chariots doesn't frighten deer, they do not run  
away,  
Drippings from skirts of hermits' bark garments to lakes  
mark the way.

Moreover,

Water of stream stirred by wind roots of trees washes,  
Red leaves' tint is soiled by smoke of *ghee* that gushes,  
In the garden where *durva* grass is cut in front here,  
Leisurely graze, you see, the fawns free from all fear.

CHARIOTEER. All that is quite true.

KING. *Advancing a little.* We should not disturb the inmates of this holy grove, stop the chariot here, so that we may get down.

CHARIOTEER. The reins are held in. Let the long-lived one alight.

KING. *Alighting.* One ought to enter hermitages in simple dress. Just take these. *Hands over bow and ornaments to charioteer.* Charioteer, let the horses be watered and refreshed till I return from my visit to the inmates of the hermitage.

CHARIOTEER. Very well. *Exit.*

KING. *Goes in and looks round.* This must be the way in. Let me enter. *Representing as if he observed an omen.*

Why does my right arm throb? Is quite tranquil hermitage ground here,  
Can its fruit arise here? Or, what's to hap happens everywhere?

*Behind the scenes.* Friends, this way, this way.

KING. *Hearing.* Ah! To the right of the grove of trees something like voices is heard. Let me just turn that way, *Advancing and looking* Ah! Hermit girls with watering-pots proportioned to their strength are coming to water plants. *Observes closely.*

Oh, how charming they look!

Hermit's daughter if in beauty does surpass the palace girl  
Then the forest creeper garden creeper surely does excel.

However, let me watch them from a snug retreat. *Stands watching.*

*Enter SHAKUNTALA with TWO COMPANIONS as described.*

SHAK. Friend, this way, this way.

ANA. Friend Shakuntala, methinks father Kashyapa loves these trees more than he loves you or you, delicate like

*navamallika* flower, he would not have engaged in the task of filling with water the trenches at the foot of trees.

SHAK. O Anasuya ! It is not father's command alone, sisterly love also binds me to them. *Goes on watering plants.*

KING. *To himself.* What ! Is she the daughter of Knava ? To have engaged her in such a task shows that venerable Knava is truly a man of little discrimination.

Wishes sage to turn to penance form by nature fine, ah me !

Seeks with edge of a blue lotus petal to cut branch of *shami*.

From my hiding place I can have a clear view of what she does. *Gazes at her*

SHAK. Friend Anasuya, Priyambada has fastened too tightly my bark garment. Do just loosen it.

ANA. Very well. *Does so.*

PRIYA. *Smiling.* Don't blame me, blame your youth which has made your breasts to grow.

KING. What she says is quite true,

Dress of simple bark her breasts 'orbs covers,

Delicate knots fasten it on shoulders,

So like pretty flower in pale leaves enclosed,

Is not her charm of youth properly disclosed ?

Or rather, bark, however unsuitable to her, I cannot say fails to serve as an embellishment. For,

How lovely lotus looks though 'its by moss bemired,

Enhances the moon's dusky spot its silver glow,

This maiden thin is winsome though in bark attired,

To graceful figure as adornment what does'nt show ?

SHAK. *Looking in front.* Yon *kesara* tree seems to bid me hasten with its leafy fingers stirred by wind. Let me pay my respects to it. *Goes near it.*

PRIY. Dear Shakuntala, stay here thus a while.

SHAK. What for ?

PRIY. For when you are near the *kesara* tree it appears blest with a creeper.

SHAK. That is why you are called 'Priyambada' (sweet-tongued).

KING. Though agreeable Priyambada is right in what she says to Shakuntala. Indeed,

Her arms are delicate like slender new twigs green,  
The charm and grace of youth throbs through all limbs  
of hers,

Her lower lip looks red like budding leaf's bright sheen,  
Her body is enchanting like a bunch of flowers.

ANA. Friend Shakuntala, this *navamallika* creeper which the mango tree has chosen to take as her bride has by you been named *vanajyotsna* (moonlight of the forest), don't you remember her?

SHAK. Then I might as well forget myself. *Approaches the creeper and looks at it.* At a charming season indeed has the union of this pair taken place. Is blest with fresh flowers this creeper, the beauty of the forest, and the sturdy mango tree is capable of enjoyment as it has shot forth many leaves. *Stands looking.*

PRIY. *Smiling* Anasuya! Do you know why Shakuntala is looking so much at this creeper?

ANA. No, I can't guess, tell me.

PRIY. She thinks she will be united with a worthy mate as the creeper is united with a suitable tree.

SHAK. That is what you think. *Inverts pitcher.*

KING. I wonder if she be the daughter of the lord of sages by a woman dissimilar in class. However, away with such doubt

Sure, she can be wed by a *kshatriya*, for to her leans my mind,  
Th'good in doubtful matters in their promptings path of action  
find.

Yet I shall try to find out the truth about her.

SHAK. *In a flurry.* Ah ! Disturbed by the water a bee leaving the *navamallika* is hovering over my face.

KING. *Feigns annoyance.* Good ! Even her repulse is charming !

With eyebrows arched she is keeping her eyes fixed on  
wretched bee,

Grudgingly, seems, learning to cast sly coquettish  
glances she.

*Addressing the bee indignantly.* O bee !

You touch oft and oft her tremulous eye's corner,

Whisper secrets to her as near her ears hover,

While she waves her hand drink from lower lip nectar,

While we're lost in doubt you win success, blest you are.

SHAK. Friend ! This impudent bee doesn't stop. I shall shift elsewhere. *Moves a step, casts a glance* What ? It follows me here too, save me, save me, from the attack of this wicked bee, friends.

FRIENDS. *Smiling.* Who are we to protect ? Cry for the king. Penance groves are guarded by him.

KING. Here is an opportunity to present myself before them. ' Have no fear. *Stops when half is said, aside.* Am I to give out that I am the King. I better speak thus :

SHAK. *Advancing a step and gazing* What ! It pursues me even here !

KING. *Approaching hastily.*

While do th' wicked punish scion of Puru's race who  
rules the earth.

Can one girls oppress in this grove who from hermits  
had their birth ?

*All feel embarrassed at the sight of the king.*

ANA. Sir, nothing serious. Our friend is frightened by a bee that's teasing her. *Points to Shakuntala.*



KING. *Looking at Shakuntala.* Do your devotional rites thrive? *Shakuntala nervous and speechless.*

ANA. Yes; by the advent of so distinguished a guest. Shakuntala! Go to the cottage, quick. Get an offering of fruits and other things. Water's here, with it he will wash his feet.

KING. By your sweet words have rites of hospitality been indeed rendered.

PRİY. Then let your Honour rest a while on this cool shady raised seat round the *saptaparna* tree and allay your fatigue.

KING. Why? You too must be feeling fatigued by your exertion.

ANA. Shakuntala, it is but right we should be near the guest. So let us sit down. *All sit down.*

SHAK. *Aside.* Wonder why having looked upon this man my feelings rebel against the rules of the hermitage.

KING. *Looking at them.* How charming must be your friendship when you are all of equal age and beauty.

PRİY. *In whispers.* Anasaya, who can this be? Pleasant is his sight, dignified his appearance, graceful his manners, he looks endowed with majesty.

ANA. My curiosity too is roused. Must ask him. *Aloud.* Your Honour's sweet words inspire confidence in me and prompts me to speak. An ornament of which family of royal sages are you? What's the kingdom whose people are pining for your absence? Why have you subjected your delicate frame to the fatigue of a visit to a penance grove?

SHAK. *Aside.* Heart, do not be uneasy. Anasuya says exactly what you have been thinking.

KING. *Aside.* How can I hide my identity? What shall I disclose? Well, let me just say this. *Aloud.* O lady! I am an officer of the descendant of Puru whose duty it is to ascertain if your religious rites are free from hindrances.

ANA. Now performers of religious rites have got a guardian. *Shakuntala shows bashfulness of love.*

FRIENDS. *Noting the demeanour of the two. In whispers.* Dear Shakuntala, if only father were here today—

SHAK. *Wrathfully.* What would have happened then?

FRIENDS. He would have entertained the great one with all that he held dear in life.

SHAK. Get away, you are speaking what is passing in your mind. I don't care to listen to your prattle.

KING. I would like to ask you something about your friend.

FRIENDS. Noble sir, it is a favour you confer on us.

KING. Venerable Kanva observed perpetual celibacy, that is well known. You say your friend is his daughter. How can that be?

ANA. Pray, listen sir. There is a royal sage of great majesty of the family of Kaushika.

KING. Yes, I know.

ANA. He is our friend's father. She was on birth abandoned by her mother. Father Kanva brought her up, so he is called her father.

KING. The word "abandoned" excites my curiosity. Let me have the whole story.

ANA. Listen then your Honour. Sometime since the royal sage was engaged in rigid penance. Alarmed the gods sent a celestial nymph, Menaka, to interrupt that penance.

KING. Gods get nervous of penances ever.

ANA. Then came the pleasant spring and seeing her intoxicating beauty—*Stops through bashfulness.*

KING. The sequel I can make out. So she is born of a nymph!

ANA. Exactly.

KING. That is quite likely.

Who does not know lightning does not spring from the earth,  
Sure none on earth e'er can to such beauty give birth.

*Shakuntala hangs her head down in modesty.*

KING. *Aside.* I feel my wishes are about to be fulfilled,  
yet I have my doubts for I heard them speak of 'husband'.  
Was that said in joke ?

PRIY. *Smiling, facing the King but looking at Shakuntala.*  
You wish to say something. *Shakuntala rebukes her friend with her finger.*

KING. You are right. I long to ask about something as  
I am eager to hear of the deeds of pious people.

PRIY. Needn't hesitate. Ascetics may freely be questioned.

KING. It is about your friend :

Will the hermit's vow dry up th' spring of love until  
she marries,  
Or, will she abide here till her death with deer which  
have like eyes ?

PRIY. Noble sir, even in religious practices our friend  
must bow to the will of another, but we know father intends  
to give her away to a suitable person.

KING. *To himself.* My prayer is not likely to be  
rejected.

O heart ! Be calm, doubts are gone, desires may be  
fulfilled, ahem !

What you took for fire and feared to touch turns out  
to be a gem.

SHAK. *As if wrathfully.* Anasuya ! I will go away  
from here.

ANA. Why ?

SHAK. Priyambada is talking nonsense. I shall report it  
to the venerable Gautami.

ANA. It is not proper you should retire without rendering due hospitality to the distinguished guest. *Shakuntala is about to depart.*

KING. *About to seize Shakuntala but restrains himself, aside.* How the lover's mind mimics action ! For,

Due decorum checked me, didn't stir, yet seemed to run  
After hermit's daughter and again to return.

PRIY. *Stopping Shakuntala.* You should not go away.

SHAK. Why not ?

PRIY. You owe me two waterings of trees, repay them, then retire. *Forces her to turn back.*

KING. Lady, I fancy your friend feels fatigued after watering the trees. See how her

Shoulders, arms, are drooping from the weight they carried,  
Breathing causes heaving of her breasts, her palms red  
Redder are still, sweatdrops are seen on her face fair,  
While braid having loosed, see, is dishevelled her hair.

So I shall free her from the debt. *Gives her a ring. Both look at the seal and name on it and at each other.*

KING. You need not hesitate to accept it. Know me to be an officer of the King and this ring a gift from him.

PRIY. You ought never to take it off your finger then. By the words of revered sir indeed she is released from the debt. *Smiling.* You are released of your obligation by the revered guest who pities you. You are free to go.

SHAK. *To herself.* If indeed I could. *Aloud.* What right have you to detain me or tell me to go ?

KING. *Looking at Shakuntala, to himself.* Does she care for me as much as I do for her ? Or perhaps, my hopes are free to indulge themselves, for,  
Listens she with care what I say though she does not give reply,  
Does not stare at me though on no other thing is fixed her eye.  
*Behind the scenes.* O ye hermits ! Be near, for the protection





he does not care to return to the capital, was up the whole of last night musing of her. What am I to do? He must have finished his morning rites by this time. Let me go and see him. *Walks round and observes.* Ah! there comes my friend in this very direction with a bevy of *yavana* women holding bows and arrows and wearing wreaths of wild flowers. Well, I shall stand as if my limbs are palsied by some infirmity—if only to obtain a short respite. *Stands leaning on his staff.*

*Enter KING with attendants as described.*

KING. It may not be easy to win her, yet  
Noting Shakuntala's feelings comfort I get,  
E'en when love its object has not attained,  
From th' mutual craving pleasure is gained.

*Smiling.* Thus is deluded a poor suitor who interprets a sweetheart's feelings by his own!

Loving glances that she cast though  
Her eyes on me for long didn't rest,  
Heaving buttocks making steps slow,  
Show how love her heart sore oppress.  
Angry words she hurled at her friend  
Who tried to detain her 'fore me  
And said, 'Don't go', she felt quite pained,  
In all these love's touch clear I see.

JESTER. *Still standing as before.* O king, I can't move my hands or feet so greet you simply with the words, 'Hail, hail to you, sir.'

KING. How did this palsy seize you?

JESTER. You indeed ask why tears flow when you are the cause of the trouble to the eye!

KING. I don't follow.

JESTER. What bends the cane? Its own weight or the flow of the current?

KING. The current of the stream, of course.

JESTER. Even so you are at the root of my trouble.

KING. How?

JESTER. Is it right you should by relinquishing your time-honoured royal duties, take to the life of a forester in such a solitary place? What do you say? I am no longer master of my limbs. My joints have become loose running after beasts of prey, so much so that I can't move a single limb, so let me rest just for a day.

KING. *Aside.* He too speaks in this strain! I don't care for hunting any longer, my mind is fixed on Kashyapa's daughter.

I cannot bend the bow  
When is fixed the arrow,  
Nor kill deer which instruct  
My love her eyes to cast.

JESTER. *Gazing at the king.* What are you thinking? Will my cry be one in the wilderness?

KING. *Smiling.* What else? How can I override my friend's wishes?

JESTER. *Pleased.* May you live long. *Desires to go.*

KING. Wait a bit, listen to what I have yet to say.

JESTER. Let your Majesty command.

KING. When you are better you must help me in another business, it is a very simple affair.

JESTER. In partaking of sweetmeats?

KING. In what I tell you.

JESTER. Now is the opportunity.

KING. Hallo! Who's there?

*Enter JANITOR.*

JAN. Sire, command.

KING. Raivataka, send for the General. *Exit Janitor.*



JAN. So be it.

*Re-enter JANITOR with the GENERAL.*

JAN. Come, come, revered sir. Here stands his Majesty looking intently in this direction eager to pass some order. Let revered sir approach him.

GEN. *Looking at the king.* Hunting has its faults true, but it has worked wonders with your Majesty. For,  
 Body hardened by incessant  
 Friction of bowstring like elephant  
 Has made your fair body strong, sire  
 Can stand rays of sun, fatigue dire,  
 Slightly you're reduced in size though,  
 Yet as full of brawn don't look so.

*Approaching the king.* With beasts of the forest hemmed in why does your Majesty stay away?

KING. All enthusiasm for hunting has been killed by the Jester running it down.

GEN. *In whispers.* Friend, be firm in your assertion. I'll try to find out what's at the back of my master's mind.  
*Aloud.* Why, the loon must have been raving. Let your Majesty yourself judge,  
 Don't you feel light, active, and your body also freed of fat?  
 Terror drive in beasts, hit them, what pleasure's greater  
there than that?

It is wrong to call chase a vice.

JESTER. *Angrily.* Clear out from here, O you tempter. We have managed to cool his ardour. I wish, wandering from forest to forest, you would fall a prey to a greedy bear fond of the delicate human nose.

KING. Well, general, I don't approve of your words as I am in the vicinity of a hermitage. Today let then,  
 Buffaloes plunge, sport, in water, toss it with horns,  
 Herds of wild deer ruminate in shade grass or thorns,

Rows of wild boars dig up *musta* grass in pools at ease,  
And let my bow rest, the grip of its string, I release.

GEN. As your Majesty pleases.

KING. Let the advance-guards stop, let none be near the  
hermitage, let none interfere with its inmates. Remember,  
Hermit loves peace, quiet he's by nature,  
Looks like sunglass harmless, but, strange creature,  
His fire's hid, like sunglass to touch quite sweet  
But burns when on it is reflected heat.

GEN. As your Majesty commands.

JESTER. Away you son of a slave. Your arguments for  
exertion have fallen flat. *Exit General.*

KING. *Looking at attendants.* You better change your  
hunting dress. Raivataka, you do your duty.

ATTENDANTS. As your Majesty commands. *They leave.*

JESTER. You have rid the place of flies. Now pray be seated  
on this piece of stone under the shade of a canopy of densely  
interwoven creepers, and let me too sit down comfortably.

KING. Lead the way. • • •

JESTER. Come sire. *Both advancing sit down.*

KING. Madhavya, you haven't obtained the fruit of  
your eyes when you haven't seen the best of things worth  
seeing.

JESTER. Why? Are you not, sir, there before my eyes?

KING. Each thinks his circle of friends and relations to  
be the best, but I have in mind Shakuntala, the ornament of  
the hermitage.

JESTER. *To himself.* Well, mustn't let him go on. *Aloud.*  
If a hermit's daughter is not to be desired what is the good of  
looking at her.

KING. Fie, you simpleton!

Why do all fix their gaze at moon newly risen,  
For it's pleasant to see, not it to imprison.

JESTER. Then let me hear.

KING. The mind of a scion of Puru's race doesn't run after a forbidden object.

Born of a nymph was abandoned Shakuntala on birth  
by mother,  
Like a *navamallika* bloom dropped on *arka* plant sage Kanva  
with care nursed her.

JESTER. *Laughing.* Just as one surfeited with excellent dates may long to taste tamarind, so is this desire of your Majesty who enjoys gems of womankind !

KING. You have't seen her, that's why your jabber so.

JESTER. She must be charming indeed since she excites your admiration.

KING. Friend, I needn't say more,  
Considering her fine form and Creator's power,  
Seems was first drawn her portrait, then life breathed in her,  
Or first conceived in mind, with finest materials  
Made, as all other women this gem sure excels.

JESTER. She puts into shade all other women then.

KING. That's what I think she does.

Her faultless form is flower that's not smelt,  
Or like a yet unplucked sprout delicate,  
Like gem not pierced, or merit's fruits not yet  
Divided, envy man who will her get.

JESTER. You must make haste or she will fall into the hands of some oily hermit.

KING. She is not her own mistress and the master is not here now.

JESTER. How was she inclined towards you ?

KING. A hermit's daughter doesn't talk much, yet  
When I turn my eyes at her withdraws her glance she,  
In course of talk ripples of smile on her face see,  
Hence course of love in her is checked somewhat, I feel  
By modesty that she doesn't reveal nor does conceal.

JESTER. She cannot jump into your lap at first sight !

KING. Her movements, particularly when we parted, plainly showed her feelings although veiled by modesty.

Saying her feet have been pricked by thorns went but  
a few steps she  
Halted, to extricate her clothes stopped a while and  
looked at me.

JESTER. Take some provision for the journey then. I see this penance grove has been turned into a pleasure grove by you.

KING. Friend, keep it a secret from the hermits. On what pretext can I revisit the grove ?

JESTER. Why bother about an excuse when you are the King ?

KING. What of that ?

JESTER. Go and demand a sixth part of the grain.

KING. Fool, hermits pay a different tribute which is worth more to me than heaps of jewels even, for,

Perishes tribute that the common people pay,  
But who the hermits' fruits of penance can take away ?  
*Behind the scenes.* Ah ! We have gained our object.

KING. *Listening.* The deep voices must be those of the hermits.

*Enter* DOOR-KEEPER.

DOOR-KEEPER. Long live the King ! Two hermit youths are waiting at the door.

KING. Bring them here soon.

DOOR-KEEPER. As your Majesty pleases. *Exit Door-keeper.*

*Re-enter* DOOR-KEEPER *with two* HERMIT YOUTHS.

DOOR-KEEPER. Come this way please, sirs. *Both look at the King.*

FIRST. How his body though full of fire inspires confidence,

or rather, it is quite natural in a king who is almost like a saint. For,

When his life is to be enjoyed he's come to stay  
In this hermitage, reaps from his duties each day  
Heaps of merit, perfect control of self has he,  
Bards praise him in heaven, might call him a *rajarshi*.

SECOND. Gautama, this is Dushyanta, the friend of Indra.

FIRST. What of that?

SECOND. Indeed,

His arms are long like town's gate-bolt, his balister  
Gives hope of victory e'en in the great god's heart,  
Though full of fire yet confidence he does foster,  
What wonder he rules the world by the ocean girt,

BOTH. *Approaching.* Long live the king!

KING. *Rising from his seat.* I salute you both.

BOTH. Blessings to you. *They present fruits.*

KING. *Bowing.* I solicit your command,

BOTH. The hermits have come to know that you are putting up here and they beg of you—

KING. What do they command?

BOTH. Worshipful Kanva is away, demons are disturbing our sacrificial rites, so be the guardian of the hermitage for a few nights along with the charioteer.

KING. I feel honoured.

JESTER. *Aside.* Here is an opportunity favourable to you,

KING. *Smiling.* Raivataka, tell the charioteer in my name to get my chariot with bows and arrows.

DOOR-KEEPER. As your Majessty commands. *Exit.*

BOTH. *Joyfully.* That is right, you tread in your forefathers' footsteps. The Purus are ordained in the sacrifice of freeing the distressed from fear.

KING. *Bowing.* You lead, sirs, we shall follow.

BOTH. May victory attend you!

KING. Madhavya, have you a mind to have a look at Shakuntala ?

JESTER. Once it was overflowing with desire, now on account of the demons not even a drop is left.

KING. Needn't be afraid. You will surely keep close to me.

JESTER. Very well then.

*Enter* DOOR-KEEPER.

DOOR-KEEPER. Hail, hail to your Majesty ! The chariot is ready. But here is Karabhaka, just arrived from the city, with a message from the queen-mother.

KING. *Respectfully*. Has he been sent by mother ?

DOOR-KEEPER. Yes, sire.

KING. Bring him here.

DOOR-KEEPER. As your Majesty pleases. *Going out re-enters with Karabhaka*. Here is his Majesty. Approach him.

KARA. *Bowing*. Hail to the king ! The queen-mother has ordered—

KING. What has she ordered ?

KARA. On the fourth day from today a ceremony for the preservation of the person of her son will take place when we should be honoured with a visit by the long-lived one without fail.

KING. Here's the hermit's task, there's mother's command, both invioable. What am I to do ?

JESTER. Like Trishamku rest midway in the air.

KING. Truly I feel embarrassed,

With two duties in two places my mind is rent,

As the stream of river struck against rock is bent.

*Reflecting*. Friend, mother looks upon you as her son. You go in my stead, tell her I am engaged in some special task here and you perform there the duties of a son.

JESTER. Surely you don't think I am afraid of demons.

KING. *Smiling.* O great *brahmana* ! How is that possible ?

JESTER. Then I wish to go as the king's younger brother should.

KING. In order to avoid disturbance to the hermitage I had better send all my followers along with you.

JESTER. *Proudly.* Indeed I am the Crown-prince now.

KING. *To himself.* This chap is indiscreet. Perchance he will report this incident to the ladies. Well, let me tell him this. *Aloud, holding Jester's hand.* Out of respect for the hermits I go to the hermitage, surely not because I care for their girls ! Behold,

What are we and what they brought up with deer like her,  
To whom love's unknown ? Words said in jest aren't true e'er,

*Exeunt all.*

## END OF ACT II.

## ACT III.

The king pining for Shakuntala sees her lying on a flower-bed in a bower. Her friends fan her and try to find out what is wrong with her. They gather it is love that is tormenting her soul. For her relief they decide that she should send a love-letter to the king. She composes a verse in which she professes her love for him. At this moment the king, who overheard their conversation, appears before them. The friends retire. The king proposes to Shakuntala that they should be married in secret. He hides himself as soon as Gautami comes to see Shakuntala. She takes her away. Demons again create trouble in the hermitage.

*Enter a pupil of KANVA with kusha grass in hand.*

PUPIL. *Reflecting.* Oh, how mighty is king Dushyanta !

No sooner did he enter the hermitage with his charioteer than our rites became free from molestation.

He hadn't to shoot a single arrow,  
By the roar of his mighty bow—  
Twang of his bowstring from afar—  
Us from obstacles all did clear.

I shall take this *kusha* grass to the priests to be strewn over the altar. *Advancing and looking. To one off the stage.* Priyambada, for whom are meant this ointment and these lotus-leaves with stalks attached? *Listening to answer.* What do you say? That Shakuntala is indisposed on account of the heat of the sun and it is for the cooling of her body. Then, Priyambada, be quick, tend her carefully. She is the very breath of the revered sage. I will also send her through the hand of Gautami soothing, holy, sacrificial water. *Exit.*

· *END OF THE PRELUDE.*

*Enter KING looking love-lorn.*

KING. *Sighing.* Power of strict penance I know,  
Girl isn't her own mistress also,  
Water never upward does flow,  
Her from heart I can't withdraw so.

O divine flower-armed god! By you and the moon, who appear to be worthy of confidence, are all lovers deceived.

I have heard your shafts are made of flower,  
And the moon's beams are quite cold, however  
These your properties are untrue in me,  
Moonbeams spit fire, your shafts hit me, I see.

O venerable god of love! Have you no pity for me?



Why are you so hard when armed only with flowers ?  
*Meditating.* Ah ! I see,

Burns in you yet Shiva's ire

Like the submarine fire.

Or, to cinders turned now

Yet inflame me, say how.

Oh ! By hundred wishes I have fostered you, see,

Is it right of you then to hurl your shafts at me ?

Or rather,

Though you give me pain, O Cupid, yet you I like,

As it's for girl of bewitching eyes you me strike.

*Advancing and lamenting.* Now that the obstacles to hermits' rites have been removed, where can I go and find relief ? *Sighing.* Surely I can have no relief except by a glimpse of my beloved. Let me go and find her out. *Looking at the sun.* It's midday. To escape from the heat Shakuntala perhaps is spending her time with her friends on the bank of the Malini where there are inclosures of creepers. There I shall go. *Advancing and looking.* That delicate damsel seems to have passed not long since through this avenue of young trees, for the cavities of the stalks of flowers that she plucked are not yet closed and milky juice yet exudes from them. *Representing touch-sensation.* Oh, how delightful is the spot because of the fresh breeze !

Lotus-scented breeze wafts sprays from Malini's ripple,

Oh how it delights, embraces, love-sick people !

*Advancing and looking* Ah, I fancy Shakuntala is somewhere near this bower enclosed by cane reeds. *Looking downwards.* For, at its entrance a fresh line of footsteps is seen. They are raised in front, depressed behind by the weight of her hips. Let me peep through the interstices of branches. *Advancing, doing so, joyfully.* Oh ! I have got the full bliss of my eyes. There the darling of my heart, reclining on a flower-bed laid

on a slab of stone is attended by her two friends. Concealed behind the creepers I shall overhear their intimate conversation. *Stands gazing in that direction.*

*Enter SHAKUNTALA as described with her two FRIENDS.*

FRIENDS. *Fanning her lovingly.* Do you find the breeze of the lotus leaves refreshing?

SHAK. Oh! Are you fanning me, dear friends? *Friends sorrowfully look at each other.*

KING. She seems to be seriously ill. *Thoughtfully.* Is it the fault of the heat? Or, as I think, is something wrong with her heart? *Gazing wistfully.* Or rather, away with doubt.

I find paint applied on her breast.  
But one gone all lotus-bracelet,  
Though distressed yet she looks charming  
True it's Cupid and heat suffering  
Cause both, yet doesn't summer's heat e'er  
Make young girls quite lovely so appear.

PRIV. *In whispers.* Anasuya, Shakuntala's trouble began since she let her eyes fall upon the royal sage. Her ailment might be due to him.

ANA. That is what I suspect too. Well, I shall ask her. *Aloud.* Friend, we would like to ask you about something. Are you sore troubled by your ailment?

SHAK. *Raising upper part of body on bed.* Say, what you were going to say.

ANA. Dear Shakuntala, we are not conversant with matters relating to love, but find your condition to be that of love-sick persons as described in books. Tell us what is the cause of your distress? Without knowing the cause who can think of the remedy?

KING. That is exactly what I feel too.

SHAK. *Aside.* I don't want to give out that my affection is deep. I shan't be able to check it suddenly.

PRIY. Friend Shakuntala, Anasuya is right. Mustn't neglect your ailment. Your limbs are getting thinner every day, only the shadow of your former loveliness is left in you.

KING. Priyambada has spoken the truth, for  
Her cheeks are sunk, breasts not firm, thin her waist,  
Shoulders droop, complexion shallow, looks vexed  
By love, charming quite, yet melancholy,  
Like *madhavi* creeper's leaves by wind dried wholly.

SHAK. Friend, to whom but to you shall I reveal the secret? I don't want to be a source of trouble to you.

BOTH. That is just why we press you. Sorrow when shared with loving friends becomes tolerable.

KING. Asked by friends who share her joys and sorrows  
she'll her mind reveal,  
She has looked at me oft, now for her reply I nervous feel.

SHAK. From the moment that the royal sage, the protector of the penance grove, crossed my sight. *Through rashfulness stops half saying.*

FRIENDS. Go on, dear friend.

SHAK. Eversince I have been reduced to this condition because my mind is gone with him.

KING. *Joyfully.* What's worth hearing I have heard.

Love once troubled me, it is now a treat,  
As dark clouds cool all by driving off heat.

SHAK. If you approve of it, so act that the royal sage bestows some pity on me, or sprinkle for me water with sesamum seed! (i.e., arrange for my funeral).

KING. These words root out all my doubts.

PRIY. *In whispers.* Anasuya, Shakuntala is far gone in love, she is unable to bear the loss of time. He on whom her

love is fixed is an ornament of Puru's race, so her love is fit to be approved.

ANA. It is just as you say.

PRIY. *Aloud.* Fortunately she has set her heart on a worthy person. Where can a river fall but into the sea? What tree but the mango can support the *atimukta* creeper?

KING. What wonder if the twin-stars Vishakha choose to follow the crescent of the moon?

ANA. What means can we adopt now to fulfill our friend's wishes quickly and secretly?

PRIY. To do it secretly the matter requires to be thought over, whereas quickly it can easily be arranged.

ANA. How?

PRIY. Why? The king also looks mad with love and is much reduced.

KING. *Looking at himself.* Quite true, for,  
Golden bracelet doesn't press 'gainst bowstring scars,  
Oft slips down the wrist, its gem dimmed by tears.

PRIY. *Thinking.* Friend, 'now draft a love-letter. Concealed in a flower it will be delivered to his hand as the remains of offerings given to gods.

ANA. I approve of the idea. What does Shakuntala say?

SHAK. Have I ever demurred to your wishes?

PRIY. Then just think of a metrical composition alluding to yourself.

SHAK. I will try, but my heart trembles from fear of rebuff.

KING. *Joyfully.*

Here stands he with you for union eager,  
Timid one! Vain's your fear of rejection,  
Suitor may or may not fortune obtain.  
How can fortune herself th' end fail to gain

Again,

Know, your lover stands quite close to you here,  
Fair ! Gems don't seek any, all seek them, dear.

FRIENDS. Cheer up. Don't run down your merits. With the hem of garment does anyone keep off autumn moonlight that cools the body ?

SHAK. *Smiling.* Now you give me something to do.  
*Sits up and meditates.*

KING. To gaze at my beloved with winkless eyes is certainly proper, for,

As she writes, her face I see, brow is raised,  
There's goose-skin on cheek, for me her love's disclosed.

SHAK. I have thought out what to write, but the writing materials are not at hand.

PRIY. Scratch the letter with your nails on a lotus-leaf which is as smooth as a parrot's beak.

SHAK. Now listen and say if it is in order or not.

FRIENDS. We are all attention.

SHAK. *Reads.*

Don't know your heart, but love warms mine, in you  
Its desires are centred, know that as true.

KING. *Suddenly approaching.* Now is the time to present myself before her.

Me love burns, but you he warms, O fair one ! you say,  
More than lily even fades the moon in the day.

FRIENDS. *Looking and getting up with joy.* Welcome to the fruit of our desires that so speedily presents itself. *Shakuntala desires to rise.*

KING. Needn't exert yourself or stand on any ceremony as your limbs, which closely press the bed of flowers, are rendered fragrant by the crushing of the faded lotus fibres and are frail.

ANA. Pray be seated on this stone slab, friend. *King sits down, Shakuntala looks bashful.*

PRIY. Your mutual love is patent. Affection for my friend prompts me to speak.

KING. Gentle lady, speak out your mind. What is wished to be said causes regret if left unsaid.

PRIY. Isn't it surely the duty of the king to remove all afflictions from the path of one of his subjects who has fallen into trouble?

KING. There is no other duty beside that.

PRIY. Pining for you day night our dear friend has been reduced by all-powerful Cupid to this condition. Pray help her to sustain her life.

KING. Gentle lady, this request I regard as a favour shown to me as our love is mutual.

SHAK. *Looking at Priyambada.* Why press the royal sage? He must be pining on account of separation from the ladies of the palace.

KING. O girl of bewitching eyes? You're  
Next to my heart: other lover  
I've none. If you think I have, then  
Hit by Cupid I am hit again.

ANA. Friend, kings are known to have many consorts. Act so that your friend may not have to be pitied by her kinsmen.

KING. Gentle lady, I may cut it short by saying that among my numerous wives two will be the chief glories of my race—the sea-girt earth and your friend.

FRIENDS. We are satisfied.

PRIY. *Looking.* Anasuya, see, our friend feels faint like a peahen oppressed by heat and cloud in summer.

SHAK. Ask the king to forgive us if any rude words may have been said.

FRIENDS. It is the transgressor that must ask for forgiveness, why should others ?

SHAK. Please forgive us, O king, for what we may have said of you even in your absence.

KING. *Smiling.* I can forgive you if only I am allowed to share with you a seat on the flower-bed.

PRIY. *In jest.* That alone will satisfy you ?

SHAK. Stop. You see I am unwell, yet you tease me !

ANA. Priyambada, this fawn is anxiously looking for its mother. Come, let us take it to her. *Both prepare to depart.*

SHAK. How can you both go away ? I shall be left alone and helpless !

FRIENDS. *Smiling.* How helpless when the protector of the world is close by ? *Erit friends.*

SHAK. What, are they really gone ?

KING. O fair ! Don't worry. Doesn't this person, your humble servant, remain near you ? Shall I fan you with cool lotus leaves which set in motion moist breeze and remove languor or massage your red lotus-like feet placing them on my lap ?

SHAK. I will not incur the censure of those who deserve my respect. *Rising desires to go.*

KING. The day is not cool yet and this is your condition !

How can you leave this bed and go

Out in the sun ? You are weak so.

*Forcibly makes her return.*

SHAK. Please behave, O King ! Smitten by love I am not mistress of my own self.

KING. O timid girl ! Away with your fear. Venerable sage Kanva can never take offence, for, daughters of sages and kings often marry according to *gandharva* rites and their parents approve of such alliances.

SHAK. Pray leave me, leave me. I must take counsel with my female friends.

KING. Well, I will set you free.

SHAK. When?

When the nectar of your lips untouched is tasted by me  
Who is thirsty, as for honey of fresh flowers is bee.

*King tries to lift her face, she to prevent him.*

KING. I am really ashamed of myself.

SHAK. I was swearing at my own fate not at you.

KING. Fate is kind to you, why do you curse it then?

SHAK. Fate attracted you to me, made me lose my balance of mind.

KING. *Aside.* Girls though willing behave differently, though longing for an embrace are loth to hold out their arms. They suffer not simply from lack of opportunity but they torment even Cupid by shilly-shallying. *Shakuntala about to go away.*

KING. Won't you put the seal to my desire? *Approaches her.*

SHAK. Pray, desist. Have respect for my honour. Hermits are about.

KING. O fair! Have no fear. Sage Kanva knows enough of the ways of the world. He won't have any occasion to regret. *Looking round.* I find I have come to an open spot. *Releases his hold on Shakuntala.*

SHAK. *Moving away.* Although your wish is not fulfilled, don't forget this poor girl.

KING. As shade doesn't at day's close from trees' feet part,  
So though far away you won't leave my heart.

SHAK. *Aside.* O fie, fie! I can hardly proceed after hearing these words. Well, let me hide myself behind the trees and watch him.



KING. How could you leave me dearest and plunge me in a sea of grief? I know your body is soft though haven't you embraced, but is your heart hard like the stalk of *sirisa* flower?

SHAK. Ah! His words keep me firmly fixed to the soil here.

*Behind the scenes.* Bride of *chakravaka*! Bid good bye to your mate. Night is approaching.

SHAK. *Agitated.* O descendant of Puru! Screen yourself behind the branches, for the venerable Gautami is coming to inquire about the state of my health. *King conceals himself.*

KING. I will.

*Enter GAUTAMI with a vessel in hand and TWO FRIENDS.*

FRIENDS. This way, venerable Gautami.

GAUT. *Approaching Shakuntala.* Coming to know of your illness I have brought this holy water. *Raising her.* You are left alone.

SHAK. My friends are just gone to the Malini stream.

GAUT. *Sprinkling holy water' on Shakuntala.* Child, live long. Do you feel better?

SHAK. Venerable mother, slightly better.

GAUT. Child, the day is gone. Come, let us retire to the cottage.

SHAK. *Getting up with effort. To herself.* Heart! You didn't cease to be anxious, even before, when the object of your desire was present. Now you are in for the pain of remorse. *Taking a step forward, aloud.* O bower of creepers! You soothed my sufferings, I call upon you once more to bring me joy. *Exit with regret with others.*

KING. *From behind the trees, sighing.* So be it, the path of consummation of my wishes is beset with thorns. I tried to kiss her but failed as she covered her upper and lower lips with her fingers, stammered out a denial and turned her

shoulder away from me: Where am I to go? Or perhaps, let me just rest in the bower of creepers which brought joy to my beloved but is now deserted. *Looks around.*

Here's stone slab where rested bed of flower,  
Nail engraved love-letter composed by dear,  
Lotus bracelet slipped from wrist, to these heart  
And eyes are set, so from bower can't part.

*Behind the scenes.* O king!

Sacrifices now perform, *ghee* we pour,  
Shades of evil spirits brown come once more,  
Lurid like clouds of eve, move round altar,  
And strike in our hearts these demons terror.

KING. *Energetically.* Have no fear, I come. *Exit.*

END OF ACT III.

## ACT IV

Her friends seem to doubt if Shakuntala has acted wisely in going through the marriage in secret. Absorbed in thoughts of her husband she does not notice Durvasa's arrival. Durvasa curses her but when appeased partially relents. Kanva coming to hear of the marriage decides to send her to her husband. She goes accompanied by a party after bidding good-bye to the hermitage and receiving Kanva's message and blessing. All are deeply affected at her departure.

*Enter TWO FRIENDS gathering flowers.*

ANA. Priyambada, though Sakuntala is united with a worthy mate by *gandharva* rite still I feel uneasy in mind.

PRIY. Why?

ANA. Sacrifice over the hermits have bid the king goodbye and he has returned to his capital and is once more joined with the ladies of his palace, will he now remember Shakuntala?

PRIY. You can rest assured, friend. Such good features can't belie good qualities: Rather, we should consider how father Kanva will view this matter on his return to the hermitage.

ANA. So far as I can judge, he won't object.

PRIY. Why do you think so?

ANA. To give away a daughter to a worthy person is the father's foremost duty. If fortune accomplish it why will he grumble?

PRIY. That is true. *Looking at the basket.* We have gathered enough flowers for worship.

ANA. Is not Shakuntala going to worship her guardian deity?

PRIY. Very well. *They go on gathering.*

*Behind the scenes* Here I am.

ANA. *Listening.* Friend, perhaps some guest is announcing his arrival.

PRIY. Why? Shakuntala is present there in the cottage, *aside*, but absent perhaps in mind.

ANA. These flowers ought to be enough. *They are about to retire.*

*Again behind the scenes.* What? You slight me, a guest!

As you do not notice me an ascetic true,  
He on whom your mind is fixed heedless of all else  
Won't remember you e'en when reminded by you.  
As a drunken man forgets the words that he says.

*Both feel sad on hearing.*

PRIY. Alas! Alas! A great mishap this! Someone worthy of being honoured has been offended by Shakuatala in a fit of absent-mindedness.

ANA. *Looking in front.* No ordinary person either, but Durvasa, the irascible sage. Having cursed her thus he is

departing hurriedly with a tremulous step difficult to be checked.

PRIY. What else but fire is capable of burning? Go, bow to his feet, persuade him to return, while I take water and offerings for worship.

ANA. As you say. *Exit.*

PRIY. *Stumbling.* O the basket of flowers fell from my hands as I stumbled on the ground, being in a hurry! *Gathers the flowers.*

*Enter ANASUYA.*

ANA. Crooked by nature, entreaties he doesn't heed, but I succeeded in making him relent a little.

PRIY. *Smiling.* That's a lot coming from him.

ANA. When I found he won't return I begged of the venerable sage to forgive the first and only offence of his daughter who knew not the power of penance.

PRIY. Then, then.

ANA. My words must not be falsified. Then he added, when shown a token the curse would cease to have effect and disappeared.

PRIY. Now we may breathe again, for there's the ring bearing the king's name fastened on her finger as a souvenir at his departure. In it Shakuntala has the remedy in her keeping.

ANA. Come friends, let us help her go through the worship of the deity. *They both advance.*

PRIY. *Looking.* Anasuya, see, how our dear friend with her face resting on her left hand looks like a picture! Thinking about her husband she has forgot her own self, what notice will she take of a guest?

ANA. Let us keep this incident confined to ourselves. Our friend, delicate by nature, should know nothing about it.

PRIV. Who likes to sprinkle hot water on a jasmine plant ?

END OF THE INTERLUDE.

*Enter a PUPIL getting up from sleep.*

PUPIL. I have been commanded by sage Kashyapa, just returned from residence abroad, to note the time. Let me go out in the open air and ascertain how much of the night is yet left. *Advancing and looking.* O woe ! It is dawn, for,

Goes to top of setting mount th' moon,

Aruna is seen, the sun will rise soon,

Orbs by rise and fall teach lesson,

Man's state does change, brighten, worsen.

Moreover, the pang of separation is hard to bear for the weaker sex.

With coming dawn the lilies fade, and purple turn

The dew-drops on leaves, antelopes o'er mud-banks peep,

The peacock's sleep is o'er, the moon's rays don't adorn,

The highest ascent of th' great ends in descent deep.

*Enter ANASUYA with a hurried toss of the curtain.*

ANA. It is not unknown to this person, however averse to objects of enjoyment, that the king has acted meanly towards Shakuntala.

PUPIL. I shall go and report to the sage that it is time for performing the sacrifice. *Exit.*

ANA. Night is over. I must resume my duty. But then what can I do ? My hands and feet can scarcely move in their usual occupations. Let love, who has joined our friend to a man who is false, triumph. Or perhaps, the change may be due to the curse of Durvasa, otherwise, how is it that the royal sage who talked so sweetly did not care to send even a letter, though such a long time has elapsed. *Reflecting.* We better send him the signet ring. The hermits, inured to hard

ship, are all engaged, who is to take it? I can't, even if I try, report to father, who is now back, that Shakuntala is married to Dushyanta and is with child. What am I to do when such is the state of things?

*Enter PRIYAMBADA.*

PRIY. *Joyfully.* Anasuya, make haste to go through the auspicious rites at the departure of Shakuntala.

ANA. How is that?

PRIY. Now listen. I went to Shakuntala to ask if she had a good sleep.

ANA. Then, then.

PRIY. Then father Kashyapa embraced and blest her saying, while she bent her head down, "Though the eyes of the sacrificer were blinded by smoke, fortunately the oblation fell straight into the fire. Like knowledge imparted to a good pupil you are no object of regret. This very day some hermits will take you to your husband.

ANA. Who made the suggestion to father?

PRIY. He heard a verse while going near the sacred fire sanctuary.

ANA. *Wondering.* Repeat that verse.

PRIY. *In Sanskrit.*

O *brahmana*! Your daughter holds for good of world entire. Dushyanta's seed like a *shami* tree that's pregnant with fire.

ANA. *Embracing Priyambada.* Friend, good news this. But she leaves today—there is joy mixed with grief.

PRIY. Friend, we shall console ourselves somehow, let the poor girl be happy.

ANA. In the coconut box hanging from a bough of the mango tree I have kept for this purpose a *bakula* garland. It is fresh yet though some time has passed since I put it there. Let me have it. Let me also prepare some auspicious

unguents for her by mixing *gorochana*, holy mud and *durva* grass.

PRIY. Do so. *Exit Anasuya. Priyambada is seen taking flowers.*

*Behind the scenes.* Gautami, let Sharangarava and others escort Shakuntala.

PRIY. *Listening.* Anasuya, make haste. The voice is that of the sages leaving for Hastinapura.

*Enter ANASUYA with decorations in hand.*

ANA. Friend, come along. *They advance.*

PRIY. *Looking.* Shakuntala has had her bath at sunrise. Hermit women, with wild rice in their hands, are congratulating her and showering benedictions upon her. Let us go to her.

*Enter SHAKUNTALA seated and engaged as described.*

SHAK. I bow to you mother. *Bows.*

GAUT. May you be the favourite queen of your husband and get the title of the "Great-Queen".

FIRST HERMIT WOMAN. Child, may you give birth to a hero.

SECOND HERMIT WOMAN. Daughter, may you be highly thought of by your husband.

*After blessing exeunt all but Gautami.*

FRIENDS. *Approaching.* May this be a happy bath to you !

SHAK. Is all well with you, friends ? Sit down here.

FRIENDS. *Taking the auspicious vessels. Seated.* Be ready. Let us smear this paste on your body.

SHAK. I value it immensely, for I may not be dressed by you again. *Sheds tears.*

FRIENDS. Friend, it is not right to weep on an auspicious occasion. *Wipe off her tears.*

PRIY. Your matchless beauty deserves better ornaments, those that we get here only mar your beauty.

*Enter TWO HERMIT YOUTHS with presents in hands.*

HERMIT YOUTHS. Here are the ornaments. Let madam put them on. *All look at them amazed.*

GAUT. Child Narada ! Where did you have them ?

FIRST. From father Kashyapa's supernatural power.

GAUT. Did he create them by the power of his mind ?

SECOND. No, indeed not. Pray listen. He bid us gather flowers for Shakuntala from forest trees. There

White silk dress to us a tree made over,

Red lac dye for use on feet another,

Ornaments some wood nymphs in hands held out

Delicate like fresh twigs that from trees sprout.

PRIY. *Looking at Shakuntala.* Don't these show you will enjoy royal fortune in your husband's palace ? *Shakuntala blushes.*

FIRST. Gautama, come, come. Let us report this incident to father Kashyapa who is bathing in the Malini now.

SECOND. Very well. *Exeunt both youths.*

FRIENDS. Ornaments we have never used, but may help you to put them on from our knowledge of them in paintings.

SHAK. Your skill is well-known to me, *Both help her put on the ornaments.*

*Enter KASHYAPA after bath.*

KASH. Shakuntala goes today, my heart with anguish is rent,  
Throat's checked with flow of tears, eyes by grief impotent,  
If such heavy grief's load bear I, mere forester,  
How much more householder parted from her daughter !

*Advances.*

FRIENDS. Dear Shakuntala, ornaments you have all got



on. Wear this pair of silk garments now. *Shakuntala rises to put them on.*

GAUT. Child, your farther is here, seems as if he embraces you with eyes overflowing with joy. Bow to him as is the custom.

SHAK. *Bashfully.* Father, I bow to you.

KASH. Daughter!

As Sharmishtha by Yayati, be honoured by your husband  
and give birth  
To a son who, as did Puru once, will rule over the whole  
earth.

GAUT. Child, it is a boon, not mere benediction.

KASH. Daughter, oblation has just been offered to the fire, go round it this way. *All walk round it.*

KASH. *Pronouncing a blessing in Rigvedic metre.*

Taken from the sacred fire may altar's pure fire  
Fed with wood, *durva* grass strown round, purge you of  
sins entire.

Now you are free to leave. *Looking round.* Where are Sharangarava and others?

*Enter TWO PUPILS.*

A PUPIL. We are here, venerable sage.

KASH. Pupils, show your sister the way.

PUPILS. Come this way, please. *All advance.*

KASH. O trees! Without you watering Shakuntala  
didn't drink,  
E'en to adorn her person of your blooms didn't think  
Of ornaments though fond, delighted who when you  
Blossomed, she to husband goes now, bid her adieu.

*A cuckoo's note is heard.*

Is approved by trees Shakuntala's departure,  
Listen! Cuckoos' sweet note gives the answer.

*Behind the scenes.*

May lakes full of lotus-beds make pleasant  
Shakuntala's journey, trees give shade, allay heat,  
May make lotus pollens the breeze fragrant,  
Gentle, favourable wind on way beat.

*All listen with astonishment.*

GAUT. Child, the deities of the penance grove, who love us as kinsmen, approve of your departure. Bow to them.

SHAK. *Bowing, advancing, in whispers.* Dear Priyambada, true, I am anxious to meet my lord, but my steps hardly move as I leave the hermitage.

PRIY. Friend, it is not you only who feel distressed, look at the hermitage, it also feels the separation, as the time for you to go draws near.

Peacocks don't dance, throw off *kusha* grass the deer,  
Twigs shed brown leaves, they too seem to shed tear.

SHAK. *Remembering.* Father, I will just bid goodbye to my creeper *vanajyotsna*.

KASH. I know you love it like a sister. Here it is to your right.

SHAK. *Approaching and embracing the creeper.*

Vanajyotsna! Embrace me, though joined you are with the  
mango tree,  
With your arms of twigs, for from today I shall roam far  
from ye.

KASH. Worthy husband, daughter, you've got  
By your good deeds as I had sought,  
As this creeper has got the tree;  
Now from worries all I am free.  
Set out on your journey from this place.

SHAK. *To friends.* I entrust this *maulhavi* creeper to you.

FRIENDS. And us in whose hands do you place? *Sheds tears.*

KASH. Anasuya, enough of weeping. You ought to console Shakuntala now. *All walk round.*

SHAK. Father, when the doe roaming slowly in the neighbourhood of the hut from the weight of the young she carries becomes safely delivered, please send me the happy news through someone.

KASH. I shall never forget to do that.

SHAK. *Gesticulating obstruction to motion.* What is this clinging to my garment? *Turns round.*

KASH. Child!

It's the fawn whose wound you healed and whom reared,  
Tenderly fed with grains, to you has veered.

SHAK. Child, why do you follow me? I am leaving my friends. I brought you up in your mother's absence. Father will look after you, so return. *Moves on weeping.*

KASH. Do not cry. Keep your eyes fixed on the path, child.

Be firm. Let not the flow of hot tears obstruct eyes,  
Or will stumble on the rough ground that 'fore you lies.

SHARAN. Venerable sir, it is said that a dear relation should be escorted as far as the water's edge. Here is the margin of a lake, here you should give us final instructions and return.

KASH. Let us take shelter under the shade of this tree, *All do so.*

KASH. *Aside.* What message would be most appropriate to send to the king. *Reflects.*

SHAK. Observe, the female *chakravaka* can't see her mate, as he is hidden by a lotus, she cries in distress. I am on a job that is really difficult.

ANA. Friend, do not say so.

*Chakravaka* passes night of mate bereft in sorrow,  
Tie of fond hope makes her bear it, heavy 'tis though.

KASH. Sharangarava, thus should the king be addressed  
by you in my name after you have presented Shakuntala  
before him.

SHARAN.- Let your Reverence command.

KASH. Having thought well of us as rich in self-control,  
Worthy of your family exalted, her whole  
Heart she giving away to you, you ought to treat  
Her as other relations you do, I entreat,  
More I do not, for that really turns on fate,  
Bride's relations can't expect more nor stipulate.

SHARN. The message I have received.

KASH. Daughter, let me address a few words to you  
by way of advice. Though we dwell in forests we are not  
unacquainted with the ways of the world.

SHARN. No subject is unknown to an intelligent person.

KASH. Going to your husband's house now from here,  
Serve your elders, be to co-wives friend dear,  
E'en if rude, be to your husband nice e'er,  
Be to servants kind, in joys be restrained,  
That's how housewives' position is maintained.

The perverse are the bane of the family. What do you  
say, Gautami ?

GAUT. Sound advice for a bride. Child, remember it.

KASH. Daughter, embrace me and your friends.

SHAK. Father, will my friends Priyambada and others  
return now ?

KASH. They too have to be given away in marriage. It is  
not fit for them to go with you, but Gautami will.

SHAK. *Embracing father.* Removed from father's lap like a

young sandal tree uprooted from the Malaya, how shall I support life in another region ?

KASH. Why are you distressed, my child ?

As the chief queen, inferior to none,  
 Busy with affairs momentous of state,  
 Having brought forth son as east brings forth sun,  
 Child your grief from parting you will soon forget.

*Shakuntala falls at father's feet.*

May you have all that I wish.

SHAK. *Approaching friends.* Come, let me embrace you both.

FRIENDS. *Doing so.* In case the king be slow in recognising you, show him the ring with his name engraved.

SHAK. This suspicion of yours makes me startle.

FRIENDS. Be not alarmed. Excessive love breeds fear of evil.

SHAK. The sun has ascended to another division (of the sky). Let your ladyship make haste.

SHARN. *Looking towards hermitage.* Father, when shall I revisit the hermitage ?

KASH. Having ruled long over the earth,  
 Settled your son then in marriage,  
 Free from worry you will set forth  
 With your husband for this hermitage.

GAUR. Child, the time for your departure is passing away. Send your father back, or he will hang on to you and continue to talk in this strain. Let your Reverence return.

KASH. Child, the performance of my devotions is being interrupted.

SHAK. *Embracing father again.* Father, your body has been reduced by penance. Do not pine for me too much,

KASH. *With a sigh.*

Daughter ! My grief never can abate

Your oblation when see at gatq.

May your journey be safe. *Exit Shakuntala with escort.*

FRIENDS. *Watching Shakuntala.* Alas, her view is cut off  
by the row of trees !

KASH. *Sighing.* Anasuya, your friend is gone. Be calm.  
Follow me.

FRIENDS. Father ! O woe ! O woe ! We enter an empty  
penance grove, as it were, bereft of Shakuntala.

KASH. That is how the course of love sees it. *Advancing.*  
Sending Shakuntala to her husband's abode I feel happy,

Daughter is another's property, I feel content,

As if have fulfilled trust, her to husband when sent.

END OF ACT IV.

## ACT V.

Interview of Shakuntala and the party with the king. Kanva's message is delivered to him but the king remembering nothing about the marriage fails to recognise her as his wife. She is left by the party at the palace until her delivery. The mysterious disappearance of Shakuntala.

*Enter KING seated and the JESTER.*

JESTER. *Listening.* Listen friend, to the sweet music played  
in the hall. Perhaps lady Hamsapadika is having her lessons.

KING. Keep quiet while I listen.

*Behind the scenes. A song.*

Longing for fresh honey why in lotus flowers do you dwell ?  
Mango blossoms having kissed once how can you forget  
them, well ?

KING. Ah, how full of feeling !

JESTER. Do you follow it ?

KING. *Smiling.* I once made love to her, so she rebukes me by referring to queen Vasumati. Tell her, friend, I have been censured quite cleverly.

JESTER. As your Majesty commands. *Rising.* Held by her with the hands of others, I will have no means of escape like an ascetic void of passion when beguiled by a nymph.

KING. Friend, speak to her in a courtly style.

JESTER. I suppose I must. *Exit.*

KING. *To himself.* Why am I touched so deeply by this song when I am not parted from any person dear to me? Or rather,

Do sweet sights, sounds, memory recall of past birth?

Why do the words take away my usual mirth?

*Sits agitated.*

*Enter CHAMBERLAIN.*

CHAM. Alas, I have indeed been reduced to such a condition!

The staff as insignia so long borne is now

Mere support become to me in old age, I trow.

I know his Majesty doesn't like to shirk a duty, yet I don't intend to disturb him by reporting the arrival of sage Kanva's pupils, as he has just left his judgment-seat. Or rather, is it that a king knows no rest? For,

Day and night wind blows, Shesha weight of earth for e'er bears,  
Are but yoked sun's horses once, so too a king fares.

It would be better perhaps for me to do my duty. *Advancing and looking.* Ah! Here comes his Majesty. Looking after his people as his children the exhausted king rests, as a big tusker does in some cool place after having led his herd in midday. *Approaching.* Hail, hail to your Majesty! Some forest dwellers, including women, have come from the Himalayan region with a message from sage Kashyapa. Let your Majesty decide what to do.

KING. *Beverently.* What? Hermits with women and a message from sage Kashyapa?

CHAM. Even so.

KING. Let preceptor Somarata be requested in my name to receive them with befitting honour. I will go and meet them shortly.

CHAM. As your Majesty commands. *Exit.*

KING. *Rising.* Show me the way to the consecrated fire-chamber, female door-keeper.

DOOR-K. This way, your Majesty.

KING. *Advancing.* Everyone is happy when he gains his end, but a king's trouble is never at an end. For, administration of a country, like an umbrella whose pole is held in hand, causes fatigue, does not remove it.

*Behind the scenes.* TWO BARDS. Hail to your Majesty!

FIRST. Toil for others, to your own comfort look never,  
Such is life, trees give shade to all, they heat suffer.

SECOND. You punish those who err,  
Or who the wrong path take,  
Lack rich men kinsmen ne'er,  
But the poor you ne'er forsake.

DOOR-K. By this door let your Majesty enter.

KING. *Ascending, leaning on the shoulder of the attendant.*  
What has brought the ascetics here I wonder!

Are their penances disturbed, or animals oppressed,  
Or their crops have failed? Tossed in doubt I feel so distressed.

DOOR-K. May be, pleased with your good deeds they have come to congratulate your Majesty.

*Enter CHAMBERLAIN and PRECEPTOR, then SAGES accompanied by GAUTAMI with SHAKUNTALA in front.*

CHAM. This way, this way, revered sirs.



SHARN. Sharadvata !

Granted, th' king ne'er swerves from duty, e'en th' unlettered  
Men don't break th' law, yet our motion here is fettered  
As accustomed we're to solitude, this big town  
Like a house enveloped in flames on us does frown.

SHARAD. Quite right.

People here regard I as those bathed take  
Th' unctuous, or th' sleeping those who are awake,  
Or as the pure in soul the impure spy,  
Or as those who are free th' fettered do descry.

SHAK. Why does my right eye throb ?

GAUT. Child, be the evil averted ! May the deities of  
your husband's family bestow on you blessing ! *They*  
*advance.*

PRECEPTOR. Oh hermits ! There the king, the protector of  
all classes, awaits you.

SHARN. Such modesty in a king may be commendable but  
we have nothing to do with it.

Trees are bent with fruits, clouds hang down with rain water,  
Riches don't make good men proud, e'er sweet their nature.

DOOR-K. Your Majesty ! The pleasant faces of the hermits  
assure me that this business is not of a serious nature.

KING. *Looking at Shakuntala.* Oh ! Here,  
Like fresh buds midst brown leaves who is this girl  
'Mong the hermits whose charm is hid by veil ?

DOOR-K. Though curious I can't guess, but isn't she  
pretty ?

KING. Let that be, I mustn't gaze at another's wife.

SHAK. *Placing her hand on her bosom. To herself.* O  
heart ! Why do you throb ? Think of the love revered sir  
bore to me. Be firm.

PRECEPTOR. *Advancing.* The hermits have brought a

message from the sage. It behoves your Majesty to lend them an ear.

KING. I am all attention.

HERMITS. *Raising their hands.* May you live long,  
O king !

KING. I salute you.

HERMITS. Be joined with the longed-for object.

KING. Are the sages' penances free from obstacles ?

HERMITS. Bound to be when their protector you are,  
Where sun shines can darkness there appear e'er. ?

KING. Then I am king indeed ! Is sage Kashyapa doing well to the benefit of the world ?

SHARN. The health of those who have supernatural powers is in their own keeping. He asked me to inquire of your welfare first, then to say this.

KING. What is the sage's command ?

SHARN. That your marriage with my daughter by mutual agreement has been approved by us as I love you both. You we regard as the foremost of the worthy, Shakuntala as goodness incarnate. By joining you together Cupid does not incur any censure. So let her who is quick with child be received by you and both pursue your religious duties together.

GAUT. I would have liked to have added something, but words fail me.

For her elders to consent she didn't wait,  
Kinsmen you did not consult, in private  
You got married, so what shall I now state ?

SHAK. What will indeed my husband say ?

KING. *Terrified.* What is this befallen me !

SHAK. *Aside.* His words are like fire indeed !

SHARN. You are well acquainted with the ways of the world.

Married woman kinsmen like to live with husband though  
not dear,

Odium incurs as unchaste if she stay with father e'er.

KING. Was this lady married by me ?

SHAK. *Sorrowfully, aside.* Heart ! Alas, alas ! Your fears were but too true !

SHARN. This aversion towards duty arising from dislike to a deed done is not worthy of a king.

KING. Why do you make such an unfair assumption ?

SHARN. Such aberrations are usually common among those who are intoxicated by power.

KING. I am fittingly censured.

GAUT. Child, let me remove your veil, then your husband will recognise you. *Does so.*

KING. *After closely observing Shakuntala. Aside.*

I ever having married this fine beauty,

However much I try, it's such a pity,

I for the present cannot recollect,

So her I can't renounce nor can accept.

I feel like a bee that at morn hangs o'er,

Can't leave nor can enjoy, the kunda flower. *Reflects.*

DOOR-K. *Aside.* Oh, our master's regard for righteousness ! Who else will deliberate on seeing such beauty so easily accessible ?

SHARN. Oh king ! Why are you silent ?

KING. O hermit ! I do not remember ever to have married her. How can I then accept the lady who bears signs of pregnancy as I doubt if I am her husband.

SHAK. *Aside.* O fie ! O fie ! He has doubts even about our marriage ! What then becomes of my high-soaring ambition ?

SHARN. You don't accept her then. Rightly does the sage who approves of the conduct of his daughter, who has been seduced by you, deserve to be treated with scant courtesy by you. He seeks to make over his own stolen property to you, a robber, as if you were a worthy recipient of it.

SHARA. Sharangarava, stop now. Shakuntala, we have said what we had to say. As his Majesty says, give him some convincing proof.

SHAK. *Aside.* What can be gained by reminding him if that deep love be so changed? But my character has to be cleared. *Aloud.* My husband! *Stops when half said*—or shall I say as the marriage is doubted—O Puru's descendant! Is it right for you having formerly in that way deceived this person who naturally believed in you, after an agreement in the hermitage, to disown her in these terms?

KING. *Stopping his ears.* May the sin be averted!

Why do tarnish family's renown

And quite needlessly run me down

As stream's water does turn quite brown

Breaking banks, foul it, trees drag down.

SHAK. Well, if you really suspect me to be somebody else's wife I can show you a token which will remove that suspicion.

KING. An excellent idea!

SHAK. *Looking at the place of ring.* Alas, it is not there!  
*Looks at Gautami sorrowfully.*

GAUT. Probably you dropped it in the stream as you were doing obeisance to the water in the sacred shrine near Shakravatara.

KING. *Smiling.* That's why they say. "Women have ready wit".

SHAK. I see the omnipotence of fate! I shall tell you of another thing.

KING. Now it comes to a matter to be heard.

SHAK. One day in a lotus-leaf cup you held some water in the *navamallika* bower.

KING. Go on.

SHAK. When you yourself first offered the water to a fawn that I was bringing up it did not venture to take it from your hand as you were a stranger. But the same water offered by me it drank eagerly. Then you observed in joke, "All confide in relations. You two are fellow-foresters".

KING. Voluptuaries are ever allured by women who seek to accomplish their own ends by such honeyed words !

GAUT. Illustrious sir, you should not say so. Reared in hermitage this girl is ignorant of deceit.

KING. Old ascetic woman !

Untaught cleverness in females we see e'en in lower world,  
What then of human ? Young cuckoos are reared by  
another bird.

SHAK. *Wrathfully.* Ignoble man ! You judge of another person by your own standard ! Who else would like you wear a cloak of virtue ? You are like a well covered with grass.

KING. *Aside.* Unfeigned seems to be her wrath, for

Her glances are not crooked, eyes are red,

Words wrath betoken, and to me applied

They are improper, yet she does not waver.

Like one frost-bit how her red lips quiver !

Her wroth's unfeigned. How suffer I in mind

Forgetting her ! Ah, how love makes her blind !

*Aloud.* Good lady, Dushyanta's character is well known. None has seen it marked with a stain.

SHAK. Then I am branded as a harlot confiding in Puru's descendant who had honey in his mouth but gall in his heart.

*Hides her face and weeps.*

SHARN. Rashly you yourself made love to him, it now burns you. Secret union should be formed after careful scrutiny. Friendship with a stranger, whose heart is unknown, often turns bitter in the end.

KING. Ho ! Ho ! Why do you confiding in this lady alone censure us ?

SHARN. *Scornfully.*

Words of one are true who always has deceived  
Of one honest from birth ne'er to be believed !

KING. Oh, speaker of truth ! We admit what you say, but tell us what we gain by betraying this person.

SHARN. Downfall !

KING. That the descendants of Puru wish it is hardly credible.

SHARA. Sharangarava. what's the use of bandying words ? We have carried out the preceptor's commission. Now let us retire.

*To king.* Here's your wife, abandon her or her accept,  
Husband is wife's master, well-known precept.

GAUT. Go in front boys. *They start.*

SHAK. Ah, how I have been duped by this villain ! Do you forsake me ? *Follows them.*

GAUT. *Stopping.* Child Sharangarava, Shakuntala follows us wailing. What is my daughter to do when her husband thus repudiates her ?

SHARN. *Turning round. Angrily.* Wanton girl ! You want to be independent of your husband ! *Shakuntala trembles in fright.* Shakuntala !

If you're as king says what has your father then to do  
with you ?

Slavery in husband's house is better if pure be your vow.  
Stay here, we go.

KING. Oh hermit ! Why delude this poor lady ?

The moon opens lilies, lotus the sun ,

Those who have self-control others' wives shun.

SHARN. But when your Majesty forgets all about the incident how can the question of shunning or sinning arise ?

KING. Let me ask you which offence is graver and which lighter—I may be mistaken or she might lie—to renounce my wife or be defiled by contact with another's ?

PRIEST. *Reflecting.* Well, let this be done.

KING. Please advise me.

PRIEST. Let her stay here till her delivery.

KING. Why ?

PRIEST. Because sages have blessed you that your first-born son will be a universal monarch. So if her son be endowed with certain marks you may take her to the female apartments, otherwise send her back to her father.

KING. As you please, preceptor.

PRIEST. Child, follow me.

SHAK. Mother Earth ! Open to receive me. *Weeps, goes with preceptor and hermits. The king's recollection being clouded by curse he reflects over something connected with Shakuntala. Behind the scenes.* O wonder, O wonder !

KING. *Listening.* What's the matter ?

*Enter* PRIEST.

PRIEST. *Amazed.* Your Majesty, a strange thing has happened.

KING. What ?

PRIEST. When the hermits left, the young girl began to curse her luck, cry and throwing up her arms to weep.

KING. What then ?

PRIEST. Then in woman's form a light was seen there,  
Her it lifted up and went away far.

*All gesticulate surprise.*

KING. Venerable sir, from the very first, we repudiated her. So what's the good of pursuing the topic? You better have rest.

PRIEST. May you live long! *Exit.*

KING. I am perplexed. Show me the bed-chamber, door-keeper.

DOOR-K. This way, this way, Your Majesty. *Proceeds.*

KING. *Advancing. Aside.*

Don't remember to have married hermit's daughter,

Why then does heart whisper yet may have married her?

*Exeunt all.*

### END OF ACT V.

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## ACT VI.

A fisherman recovers the ring from the stomach of a fish. He is arrested and taken to the palace but the king orders his release. The sight of the ring reminds him of Shakuntala. He feels sadly disconsolate at her loss, goes to a garden, there looks at a picture of Shakuntala drawn by him and raves about her. A nymph from heaven, friend of Shakuntala's mother, watches the king's conduct. He goes to heaven in a car sent by Indra to fight some demons who were oppressing the gods.

*Enter the king's brother-in-law, the SUPERINTENDENT OF THE CITY POLICE, after him Two GUARDS holding a MAN whose hands are tied behind his back.*

GUARDS. *Striking the man.* O thou cutpurse! Where didst thou find this ring set with gem and with the king's name engraved thereon?

MAN. *Frightened.* May your honour be pleased, I haven't done any such act.

FIRST G. Is this then a gift from the king to a worthy *brahmana*?



MAN. Now listen. I am a fisherman living in Shakravatara.

SECOND G. Robber, did we ask you about your caste?

SUPERIN. Suchaka, let him state in due order. Don't stop him in the middle.

BOTH. As your honour says. Go on.

MAN. With nets and hooks and other contrivances I support my family by catching fish.

SUPERIN. *Laughing.* An honest occupation certainly.

MAN. Master, do not say so,

One must not despise the business one is born in, verily,  
*Brahman's* full of pity, but he slaughters beasts too merrily.

SUPERIN. Then, then.

MAN. One day I caught a fish. When it was sliced I found this shining jewel in its stomach. Then while I was trying to sell it I was arrested by you. Kill me or release me. This is the whole story as to how I got it.

SUPERIN. Januka, this vile fellow stinking of fish must be a fisherman. How he came by this ring we must ascertain. Let us go to the palace.

GUARDS. Right sir. Proceed, you cutpurse. *All advance.*

SUPERIN. Suchaka, guard this man at the city-gate till I have reported the matter to his Majesty and received his orders.

GUARDS. Let your honour enter to receive your brother-in-law's command. *Exit Superintendent.*

FIRST G. Januka, his honour is late. Isn't he?

SECOND G. Why, for the king's pleasure one must await his leisure.

FIRST G. My fingers itch to tie a wreath round his neck.  
*Points to the man.*

MAN. You should not sir, kill a man without reason.

SECOND G. Here comes our chief with a letter in-hand. You will either be offered to the vultures or thrown to the dogs.

SUPERIN. *Entering.* Soon this fellow—

MAN. I am doomed.

SUPERIN. Suchaka, release the fisherman at once. His story of how he came by the ring is probable.

FIRST G. As your Honour says.

SECOND G. *Entering* the abode of death he is back again. *Releases the man.*

MAN. *Falling at Superintendent's feet.* His Majesty has given you the value of the ring as reward. *Gives gold coins to the man.*

MAN. *Taking with a bow.* I accept it with pleasure, sir.

SECOND G. The reward means that the fellow is removed from the stake and mounted on the neck of an elephant.

FIRST G. Sir, the ring must be very valuable and highly prized by the king.

SUPERIN. It is not the value that the king cares for, but it recalled instantly to his mind some dear person. Naturally grave, I noticed that for a moment he became much agitated in mind.

SECOND G. Your Honour has served the king well indeed.

FIRST G. Rather say, for the sake of this chief of fishermen. *Eyes the man with displeasure.*

MAN. Master, let half the money be the price of the wreath.

SECOND G. That is but right.

FIRST G. Fisherman, great as you are, you have now become my dear friend. Our friendship may be sealed with liquor as witness. So let us move to a grogshop.

ALL. All right. *Exeunt all.*

END OF THE INTERLUDE.

*Enter a nymph called SANUMATI in an aerial car.*

SAN. Attendance at bathing time at Apsarastirtha is to be kept by us. It has been so kept by me. I shall now go and see with my own eyes the condition of the royal sage. My relations with Menaka are such that Shakuntala has become part of my own body and I have been requested by Menaka to do something for her daughter. *Looking around.* Why don't I see any sign of festivity in the palace in this season of spring-festival? I have power to find out everything by means of profound meditation. But I must respect the wishes of my friend. So let me stand invisible near these female garden-keepers and watch. *Representing descent, stands.*

*Enter a MAIDSERVANT gazing at mango blossoms  
and another behind her.*

FIRST. Buds of mango tree, green and pale,  
Soul of vernal season! Vale, dale,  
You all o'er this season I see  
Lucky little things, bow to ye.

SECOND. Parabhatrika, what are you muttering?

FIRST. Madhukarika, the buds of mango blossoms drive Parabhatrika (the female cuckoo) mad.

SECOND. *Hastily approaching. Joyfully.* Is it the spring month?

FIRST. Madhukarika (Female bee), now is your time for singing sweet songs.

SECOND. Friend, hold me, standing on the tips of my toes. I will get some fresh buds for the worship of Cupid.

FIRST. If mine also would be half the fruit of the worship.

SECOND. Certainly, that goes without saying, for our life is one though bodies are different. *Stands leaning on her friend plucking mango blossoms.* Though not full blown these blossoms

are yet fragrant when they are plucked from the stalk.

*Joining her palms.*

Mango blossom ! Offer you to Cupid who has in hand bow,  
Let him to hit travellers' young wives you as the arrow throw.

— *Offers the mango blossoms.*

*Enter VATAYANA, Chamberlain, in great rage with a hurried  
toss of curtain.*

CHAM. You mustn't, you giddy girl. Why do you pluck mango blossoms when the spring festival has been prohibited by his Majesty ?

BOTH. *Alarmed.* Be pleased, revered sir, we did not know it.

CHAM. Indeed ! Haven't you heard of the royal order which is regarded as authoritative even by trees which blossom in spring and by birds that inhabit them ? For,

Mango buds aren't pollen forming, are not blossoming,  
*Kurabaka* doesn't bloom, don't male cuckoos sing, though  
it's spring.

Even Cupid rests his shaft half-drawn in bowstring.

SAN. Quite true. It must be due to the great prowess of the royal sage.

FIRST. Revered sir, we have been here only a few days, sent to the feet of his Majesty by Mitravasu, the king's brother-in-law and we have been entrusted with the task of protecting the pleasure-garden. As we are strangers this order has not been heard of by us.

CHAM. All right. Don't do it again.

BOTH. Revered sir, we are curious to know, if you have no objection, why the spring festival has been forbidden by the king.

SAN. Mortals are fond of festivities, so there must be some good reason.

CHAM. Why, all know it, so there is no harm repeating it. Haven't you heard of the scandal about the repudiation of Shakuntala?

BOTH. We have heard of the story from the king's brother-in-law as far as the king's seeing the ring.

CHAM. Then practically you know all. When he saw the ring he was reminded of Shakuntala and of his marriage with her in secret and ever since he is buried in remorse.

From that time he has not in bed a wink of sleep,

He tosses restless, wrought up, e'en his ministers

Can't see him, an aversion he has since got deep

For fine things. To his shame, in his wives' names he blunders.

SAN. O joy!

CHAM. On account of the mental depression of his Majesty the festival has been stopped this year.

BOTH. Rightly too.

*Behind the scenes.* Let your Majesty proceed.

CHAM. *Listening.* O, his Majesty is coming this way! Attend to your duties.

BOTH. So be it. *Exeunt both.*

*Enter the KING in a dress suited to his penitient mood, the*

*JESTER and a FEMALE DOOR-KEEPER.*

CHAM. *Seeing the king.* Ah! Lovely features ever look pretty. Even in the midst of his deep anxiety his Majesty looks lovely.

Wears a single bracelet, ornaments he has discarded,  
Lower lip is parched by hot sighs, his eyes ever are red  
As sleep he has given up, of his beloved does ponder,  
Like a gem scratched, though does not look it, he is now  
slender.

SAN. *Seeing king.* Rightly does Shakuntala, though insulted by repudiation by the king, pine for him.

KING. *Going round and meditating.*

Though roused by my fawn-eyed love this wretched heart slept,  
Now it is awake and in contrition's pang steeped.

SAN. Such is indeed the poor girl's luck !

JESTER. *In whispers.* Here is he seized by the Shakuntala malady ! I don't know how I can cure him of it.

CHAM. *Approaching.* Hail, hail to your Majesty ! Great king, I have carefully inspected the pleasure-garden ground. Enjoy yourself as your Majesty pleases

KING. Door-keeper, tell minister Pishuna in my name that I cannot occupy the judgment-seat today as I was long awake last night. Let him go through the business of the citizens, put that into writing and send it to me.

DOOR-K. As your Majesty commands. *Exit.*

KING. Vatayana, you may go about your own affairs.

CHAM. As your Majesty commands. *Exit.*

JESTER. You have freed the place of flies. Now sport in this region, it is so charming as it is neither hot nor cold.

KING. Friend ! How true is the saying, "Calamities rush in through weak points". Behold

No sooner was I getting better  
From gloom cast by the sage's daughter,  
Than was fixt mango blossom arrow  
By Cupid, to strike me, to bow.

JESTER. Well, watch. I will destroy Cupid's arrow with this wooden staff of mine. *Raises his staff to hit the mango sprout.*

KING. *Smiling.* Well, I have seen the power of a *brahmana*. Friend, where can I sit and see the creepers that somewhat resemble my love ?

JESTER. Didn't you tell the maid-servant that you would pass the day in the *madhavi* bower and get there the picture-board with Shakuntala's portrait on it drawn by yourself ?

KING. Such a place for soothing the heart ! Lead me to the harbour.

JESTER. This way, this way, your Majesty. *Both go round, Sanumati following.* Look, the *madhavi* creeper provided with a crystal slab offers its welcome to us through the lovely flowers. Let your Majesty enter and take a seat. *Both enter and sit down.*

SAN. I would also like to have a look at my dear friend's portrait. I shall report to her about her husband's affection later. *Doing so, stands.*

KING. Friend, now I remember all about Shakuntala. I told you the story also. You were not present at the time of repudiation, but never before did you mention her name to me. Was it a lapse of your memory ?

JESTER. I remembered it, but after stating everything you observed, 'It was all a joke'. I, whose brain is like a lump of clay took it seriously. Or, perhaps, fate is all-powerful.

SAN. That's just it.

KING. *Reflecting.* Friend, help me.

JESTER. What's this ? Such conduct is surely unbecoming in you. Good men do not allow themselves to be swallowed up by grief. Mountains ever remain motionless though heavy gales might blow.

KING. Friend, I feel so depressed when I recollect the distressed state of my beloved when I renounced her, For she,  
Sought her people when disowned, poor girl, to follow,  
Stopped as father's pupil, 'Stay here', loud did bellow,  
With flow of tears bedimmed at me then cast her eye,  
Like envenomed shaft burns heart, how cruel was I !

SAN. Alas ! Such is his devotion to the object (of his love). His distress is pleasing to me.

JESTER. I have a suspicion that she has been spirited away by a celestial being.

KING. Who else can dare touch a chaste wife? Menaka, it is said, is her mother, she has, I suppose, induced some friend to take her away.

SAN. Truly the forgetfulness is to be wondered at, not the awakening from it.

JESTER. If so, have patience, some day you will be united with her.

KING. Why?

JESTER. For his parents can't see her afflicted by pang of separation from her husband.

KING. Friend!

Was it a mere dream or an illusion?

Or, of my mind was it a delusion?

Or, exhausted are my good deeds' merit?

She's gone, my hopes are dashed from mountain height!

JESTER. Oh, not so, the discovery of the ring makes me feel sure of an unexpected meeting with her.

KING. *Looking at the ring.*

Small your credit could not linger

On my lady's lovely finger,

Charming red is whose nail's bright glow,

But are fallen like me e'er so.

SAN. It would have been lamentable if it had fallen in another's hand.

JESTER. How did the ring come into contact with my lady's finger.

SAN. I was equally curious to know it.

KING. Listen. As I was starting for the capital my darling asked me when she would hear from me.

JESTER. Then, then.

KING. Then I put the ring on her finger and said,

Count each day the letters of my name on the ring,

'Fore it's over someone you to palace will bring.



Through folly this hard-hearted person did not do it

SAN. Cheated by fate on the eve of a charming period !

JESTER. How did it get into the stomach of a fish cut by a fisherman ?

KING. Slipped from her finger in the Ganges while she was doing obeisance.

JESTER. Very well.

SAN. Hence arose a doubt in the pious king's mind about her marriage, otherwise such love does not need a token for recognition. What else could it be ?

KING. I will now rebuke the ring.

JESTER. *Aside.* He treads the path of mad men.

KING. How could plunge in water, O ring !

Leave my lady's finger, sweet thing !

Or rather,

How would know this senseless object ?

When came love why didn't I her accept ?

JESTER. *Aside.* I am devoured by hunger.

KING. O you discarded without reason ! Favour with your sight this person whose heart is burning with remorse.

*Enter with a hurried toss of the curtain CHATURIKA with picture-board.*

CHAT. My lord, here is mistress in the picture. *Shows picture.*

JESTER. Excellent, friend, excellent. Her emotions are beautifully portrayed. My sight stumbles at the prominences and depressions.

SAN. O, the skill of the royal sage ! I see my friend standing before me.

KING. Do you see how her large eyes to the ears extend ?  
Like jujube fruit radiant are hips, brows down bend,

The lustre of teeth on lips like moonbeam does shine,  
 Tender looks her body. Isn't the expression fine ?  
 How graceful see her beauty, though it is mere paint  
 And the charm that is in her it copies but faint.

Moreover,

See even as it stands, her breasts seem prominent,  
 Her navel looks sunk, offerings look uneven,  
 Though drawn on mere canvas, she's staring through  
 attachment

At me, methinks she smiles, tries to speak, but in vain.

SAN. This is real love made intense through remorse, void  
 of any touch of self-conceit.

JESTER. There are three ladies in the picture, all charming,  
 which is her ladyship Shakuntala ?

SAN. Vain are his eyes. They fail to appreciate beauty.

KING. Well, whom do you take her to be ?

JESTER. I imagine it is she who is drawn as if she is a little  
 tired, standing by the side of the mango tree with its shimmering  
 foliage, with glossy hair from which flowers have dropped,  
 with a face on which perspiration is seen, with arms drooping—  
 that is Shakuntala. The other two are her friends.

KING. That's right. You are really clever. As proof of  
 my passion you see,

It's marred by my perspiration I fear,  
 On her cheek has fallen drop of my tear.

Chaturika, the site of our diversion is not finished yet.  
 Get me the brush.

CHAT. Revered Madhavya, will you hold the picture till I  
 return ?

KING. I shall hold it. *Does so. Exit Chaturika.* Indeed,  
 When she came to me, ah ! I renounced her,  
 Yet esteem her transferrèd to the picture.

O friend ! Mirage I am chasing for e'er,  
Ah me ! Leaving river full of water.

JESTER. *Aside.* Here sire having crossed a river really  
chases a mirage. *Aloud.* Oh ! What else remains to be  
drawn ?

SAN. Possibly some favourite haunts of my friend.

KING. Listen.

Stream Malini has to be drawn on which rest  
Pairs of swans, the sacred hills with their crest,  
On them some deer roaming or but lying,  
Trees on branches hermits' garments drying,  
On black antelope's horn rubbing a doe  
Her left eye—all these yet picture must show.

JESTER. *Aside.* He might fill the canvas with a multitude  
of long-bearded hermits as well !

KING. Friend, and another thing, an ornament of Shakun-  
tala which I meant but forgot to put in.

JESTER. What's it ?

SAN. Something suitable to the simple dress of a girl  
dwelling in a forest.

KING. *Sirisa* flower, friend, with stalk placed on ear,  
Fibres hanging down cheeks, lotus' fine hair  
Hanging 'tween breasts from neck forming necklace,  
Delicate like vivid autumn moon's rays.

JESTER. As she stands she looks frightened, so has  
covered her face with the tip of her fingers, bright like lotus.  
*Observing carefully.* Oh see how the bee, the son of a slave, the  
robber of the honey of flowers, is darting towards her face.

KING. Stop the impudent creature.

JESTER. Only you, the chastiser of the wicked, can drive  
it off.

KING. Very good. O you, the beloved of flowering creepers! Why go through the trouble of haunting here?

Female bee attached to you sits on a flower,

Waits though thirsty, doesn't sip honey without lover.

SAN. Very politely warned.

JESTER. The bee is perverse!

KING. *Wrathfully.* Oh, you don't obey me! Bee, if you dare touch my lover's *bimba-like* lower lip, charming like a fresh leaf, which was kissed by me tenderly in paroxysm of love, I shall shut you up in the hollow of a lotus.

JESTER. Now it ought to be afraid. *Laughing, aside.* Isn't he raving? I too have been infected with a touch of the same malady by contact with him. *Aloud.* Oh! It is only a picture.

KING. What? Just a picture and nothing more!

SAN. Now only I realise that fact. What then must be the feelings of the painter?

KING. Why were you so envious as to tell me the truth?

My heart was absorbed, friend, in her,

Saw her 'fore me, got such pleasure,

You have roused me from dream, so her

See once more back in the picture. *Sheds tears.*

SAN. Isn't the king's prior and later conduct contradictory?

KING. Friend, why do I suffer such unending agony?

Union with her's barred e'en in dream, as I'm e'er awake,

Tears blind vision, her sight e'en in picture must forsake?

SAN. Surely you have thoroughly wiped out Shakuntala's grief for repudiation.

*Enter CHATURIKA.*

CHAT. Hail to your Majesty! With the box of brushes I was coming here—

KING. What then?

CHAT. When it was forcibly snatched away by queen Vasumati who was attended by Taralika. The queen said she would bring it herself to your Majesty.

JESTER. Luckily, you were let off.

CHAT. While the queen's garment which was caught in a tree was being disengaged by Taralika I ran away.

KING. Friend, the queen is coming here. She fancies I think a lot of her. Save the picture.

JESTER. - Say, 'Save yourself' ? *Takes the picture and rises.*  
If your Majesty be released from the deadly poison of the harem, then call me from the Meghapraticchhanda palace (Palace of clouds). *Goes out quickly.*

SAN. Though his love is fixed on another, yet the king does not wholly ignore his first love.

*Enter DOOR-KEEPER with letter in hand.*

DOOR-K. Hail, hail to your Majesty.

KING. Door-keeper, did you really see the queen on your way ?

DOOR-K. Yes, your Majesty, but seeing a letter in my hand her Majesty returned.

KING. She knows how important my duties are, so doesn't interfere with them.

DOOR-K. Your Majesty, by reason of the delay caused on account of the calculation of revenue items the minister reports only one case has been investigated and the paper he has sent.

KING. Show it to me. *Door-keeper delivers it.*

KING. *Reads, then says.* A leading merchant Dhanamitra trading by sea, died of shipwreck. He was childless. His wealth so goes to the king. Let his Majesty decide what is to be done. *Sorrowfully.* To be childless is to be miserable. Vetravati, the merchant was rich; he must have had several wives. Let an inquiry be made if any is big with child.

DOOR-K. Your Majesty, it is reported one of his wives, the daughter of the foreman of a guild in Ayodhya, has just completed certain ceremonies performed in expectation of childbirth.

KING. The property should go to the child in the womb, say so to the minister.

DOOR-K. As your Majesty commands. *About to leave.*

KING. Listen.

DOOR-K. Yes, you Majesty.

KING. What's the good of inquiring if he has left any issue or not. Let it be announced that on the death of those who have no near relation Dushyanta will be relations to them, only if no sin be involved.

DOOR-K. It should be done. *Going out and re-entering.* Your Majesty's announcement has been welcomed like a timely shower.

KING. *Sighing.* Property thus goes over to a stranger on the death of a person in the absence of lineal descendant. Thus too will pass on my death the fortunes of Puru's race.

DOOR-K. Heaven forbid !

KING. Fie on me who spurned the good fortune that befell me !

SAN. Undoubtedly thinking of my friend he is blaming himself.

KING. Ah ! I cast aside my lawful wife, the glory of my family, though I was implanted in her. She was like the earth sown with seed at the right time and about to bear a mighty fruit.

SAN. Your line will continue without a break.

CHAT. *In whispers.* The king's agony is doubled by the story of the merchant. To console him fetch the Jester.

DOOR-K. Very well. *Exit.*

KING. Alas ! I am sonless, so my forefathers are most anxious.

Who will give libations to ancestors, they fear,  
Doubt makes them drink water offered by me with tear.

*Swoons.*

CHAT. *Hastily supporting him.* Let master take comfort.

SAN. Alas ! Alas ! The lamp is there but owing to a screen he can't see the light. Perhaps I can make him happy, for I have heard the gods say that as they long for their shares in the various sacrifices they will soon send Shakuntala back to earth. So ere long he will meet his duly wedded wife. I had better wait. In the meantime let me go and and inform my friend. *Returns to sky.*

*Behind the scenes.* Sacrilege ! Sacrilege !

KING. *Coming to his senses and listening.* It is the cry of Madhavya ! Who is here ? What, ho !

*Enter DOOR-KEEPER.*

DOOR-K. *Confused.* Let your Majesty protect your friend. His life is in danger.

KING. By whom is the poor fellow humiliated ?

DOOR-K. Some invisible form has overpowered him and taken him to the turret of the palace.

KING. Impossible. My palace can't be infested with evil spirits. Or perhaps,

I don't know the lapses I myself commit each day ?  
How can I say if my men pursue right or wrong way.

*Behind the scenes.* Alas ! Alas !

KING. *Advancing hurriedly.* Needn't be alarmed.

*Behind the scenes.* I can't but be nervous. Here's someone twisting my neck is crushing my bones like a sugarcane.

KING. *Casting a glance.* My bow.

*Enter a SERVANT with bow and arrows in hand.*

SERV. Master, here are your bow and arrows. *King takes them.*

*Behind the scenes.*

As a tiger kills beasts for fresh blood I will kill you, see how,  
Let bold king Dushyanta, if he can with his bow, save his  
friend now.

KING. He dares revile me ! Stay, eater of corpses, your  
time is come. *Stringing his bow.* Door-keeper, show me  
the way.

DOOR-K. This way, this way, your Majesty. *All approach hastily.*

*Looking around.* The place is empty.

*Behind the scenes.* Alas ! I see your Majesty, you don't  
see me. Like a mouse seized by a cat I despair of life.

KING. O you who is proud of your invisibility ! My  
arrow will find you out. I fix it now.

It will kill you, the *brahmana* protect ?

As swans drink milk, water do reject. *Takes aim.*

*Enter MATALI and JESTER.*

MAT. 'Gainst fiends gods desire draw your bow,  
On friends favour falls not arrow.

KING. *Withdrawing the missile.* O Matali ! Welcome,  
Indra's charioteer.

JESTER. The king greets one who was about to kill me like  
a sacrificial goat,

MAT. *Smiling.* Long-lived one ! Indra has sent me  
to you.

KING. I am all attention.

MAT. There is a group of demons, the descendants of  
Kalanemi.



KING. Yes, I have heard of them from Narada.

MAT. Them Indra can't beat, calls upon you to fight,  
Moon not sun destroys the darkness of night.

So please take up your weapons, mount this chariot of  
Indra and start for victory.

KING. I am honoured by the great favour shown to me  
by Indra but why were you rough on my friend?

MAT. That is soon told. I found you in the doldrums  
owing to some affliction. To give you a good shake up I  
acted in this manner.

Fuel when stirred blazes the fire,  
Snakes put out fangs when they are attacked,  
So to greatness people do aspire  
Not when cheerless but when they're provoked.

KING. *In whispers.* Friend, I can't trample under foot  
the command of the lord of heaven, so tell my minister Pishuna  
in my name to govern the country in my absence. My bow  
will be engaged elsewhere.

JESTER. As your Majesty commands. *Exit.*

MAT. Long-lived one! Ascend the chariot. *King does so.*

*Exeunt all.*

END OF ACT VI.

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ACT VII.

The king victorious in his fight with the demon while returning to earth stops at Matichi's hermitage on a mountain on the wayside. There he comes across a boy playing with a lion cub. The touch of the boy sends a thrill of joy through his body. He touches the boys amulet without any evil effect, then he meets Shakuntala and there follows a happy union. They come down to the earth.

*Enter king mounted on aerial chariot with Matali.*

KING. Though I have carried out Indra's command I deem myself unworthy of the special honour shown to me.

Mr. *Smiling*. Long-lived one, both are dissatisfied, I find, for,

You forget th' good you've done, highly think of  
honour he has shown,  
He doesn't think much of it, highly thinks though of  
great deed you've done.

KING. Matali, don't say so. The honour shown me at the time of my departure was beyond expectation. Fancy, he made me share his seat in the presence of the gods,

Gave me wreath of *mandara* flowers  
Smeared with yellow sandal from chest,  
Son Jayanta longed for such favours,  
Deemed me worthy, not him or th' rest.

MAT. What possibly doesn't the long-loved one deserve from the lord of the immortals addicted to pleasure in heaven?

Heaven was of demons first by man=liou freed,  
Now for gods made safe by your might all are agreed.

KING. For it one has to thank the majesty of Indra alone.  
 Servants in great deeds their ends attain,  
 'Cause of their masters' might and main,

Arun couldn't drive gloom with which night's fraught,  
If not placed on sun's chariot.

MAT. That is worthy of you. *Advancing a little.* O long-lived one, behold, how the glory of your fame is firmly established in heaven.

See celestial beauties there depict on *kalpa* trees' garment fine,  
With what's left of paint, your deeds embodied in suitable line.

KING. Matali, in my eagerness to fight with the demons I did not observe yesterday the path to heaven on my way up. In which path of the wind are we now ?

MAT. In the region sanctified by Hari's second step, the path of wind Pravaha, whence flows the triple celestial Mandakini rivers and the path which causes the luminaries to revolve and duly distribute their rays.

KING. That is why I inwardly as well as outwardly feel tranquil. *Looking at the wheel.* We are descending to the region of the clouds.

MAT. How do you know it ?

KING. The rims of the chariot-wheels are damped by mist as they career over clouds laden with rain, the horses shimmer in the lightning while *chatakas* fly through the interstices of the spokes.

MAT. Soon your Majesty will reach your own kingdom.

KING. *Looking downwards.* Owing to our rapid descent the world of men strikes us as beautiful. For,

From uprising hilltop earth is downward sliding,  
Hid by leaves no longer the tree-trunks to view appear,  
Streams so long thin now broad are seen to be gliding,  
Methinks by one lifted earth is to me brought near.

MAT. Well observed, O long-lived one ? *Looking with awe.* The earth looks charming and grand indeed !

KING. Matali, what mountain is that which is plunged in

the eastern and western oceans with a stream of liquid gold running on it and looks like a bank of evening cloud ?

MAT. Long-lived one, it is the mountain of the *kinnaras*, called the Hemakuta (Golden Peak), the scene of the fulfilment of the highest forms of penance. Behold, there Kashyapa, the son of Brahma's son Marichi, the progenitor of gods and demons practises penance with his wife.

KING. His blessings surely I ought not to miss, I would like to walk round the revered sage.

MAT. An excellent idea. *Representing descent.*

KING. *With surprise.*

Rims of wheels make no noise,  
Also dust here none annoys,  
As doesn't touch earth smooth flies.  
Car, descent so none spies.

MAT. There lies the only difference between your chariot and Indra's.

KING. Matali, where is revered sage Marichi's hermitage ?

MAT. *Pointing with finger.*

Motionless like trunk of tree stands sage there  
Facing sun, frame buried half in anthill,  
Neck by creepers twined where serpents' sloughs adhere,  
Matted hair on head nests of birds do fill.

KING. I bow to him who performs such rigid austerities.

MAT. *Drawing the reins of chariot.* Now we are in the hermitage, the *mandara* trees here have been reared by Aditi.

KING. This spot is even more pleasant than heaven. I feel immersed in a pool of nectar.

MAT. *Stopping chariot.* Let the long-lived one alight.

KING. *Alighting.* How will you alight now ?

MAT. The chariot will remain where I have stopped it.

We shall both get down. *Doing so.* This way, long-lived one. *Advancing.* Let the penance groves of revered sages be seen by you.

KING. Truly I behold with astonishment.

Hermits do their penance to support life where *kalpa* trees  
abound,

Water yellow turned by golden pollens for ablution found,  
Sit on jewelled stones, for meditation practise they restraint  
'Midst nymphs, other sages to come here do practise hard  
constraint.

MAT. High-soaring indeed are aspirations of the great.  
*Advancing. To one off the stage.* O Vriddhashakalya! What is revered Maricha doing? What do you say? That being questioned by Aditi he is expounding the duties of devoted wives to sages' wives.

KING. *Listening.* We must wait for a favourable opportunity.

MAT. *Looking at king.* Pray sit down under the shade of the *ashoka* tree while I find out the opportune moment to announce your arrival to Indra's father.

KING. As you like sir. *Remains there.*

MAT. Long-lived one! I go. *Exit.*

KING. *Indicating an omen.*

I can't hope for what I long for  
O arm! Why do you throb in vain?  
My bliss I have surely spurned before  
So am bound in misery's chain.

*Behind the scenes.* Don't be rash indeed. What? He has reverted to his own nature.

KING. *Listening.* None can be rude here. Who is he indeed that is being restrained? *Looking in the direction of the voice, amazed.* Who is this boy of prodigious strength attended by

two female ascetics? He drags for sport from its mother a lion's cub while it is being suckled.

*Enter a BOY engaged as described with two WOMEN ASCETICS.*

BOY. Yawn lion, I shall count your teeth.

FIRST. Wild boy, you are perfectly intractable. Why do you tease the animal? You are getting wilder every day. Rightly are you called Sarvadamana, the tamer of all, by the ascetics.

KING. Why do I feel drawn towards the boy as if he was my own? Does childlessness make one affectionate?

SECOND. The lioness will pounce upon you if you do not let go the cub.

BOY. *Smiling.* I am frightened. *Pouts his lower lip.*

KING. I find this boy's seed of strength great

Fire as spark for fuel does await.

FIRST. Child, release the cub, I will give you a toy.

BOY. Where is it? Give it. *Stretches out his hand.*

KING. *Looking at boy's hand.* What! He bears the sign of a universal monarch!

Fingers, joined as by web, shines like lotus

Bright red, opened at dawn, joined the petals.

SECOND. Subtata, mere words will fail to pacify him. Get the coloured clay peacock belonging to another hermit boy from my cottage and give it to him.

FIRST. All right. *Exit.*

BOY. I shall play with the lion in the meantime. *Laughs looking at the ascetic woman.*

KING. Strange! How I feel drawn towards this boy.

Children, oh! How they smile and play,

Smile which shows all their teeth away.

Sweet their words half-uttered, limbs smeared

With dust, blest those who their sons reared.

SECOND. He doesn't care for me. Who's there? *Looking*

*toward tiring-room.* Is any hermit-boy here? *Seeing king.* Good sir, take away the cub which the boy is teasing, his grasp is difficult to be unloosened.

KING. *Approaching with a smile.* If you son of a great sage

Like a serpent clinging to sandal tree,

To break rules of hermitage think you're free,

Who will your ancestors' self-restraint show?

Don't tease, see how here all beasts come and go.

SECOND. Good sir, he is not an ascetic's son.

KING. His appearance and behaviour bespeak it, but this being a hermitage we thought differently. *Touching the boy while trying to release the cub. Aside.*

If such be my joy while I touch this boy,

Then his lucky father must feel what joy!

SECOND. *Closely observing both.* Strange! Strange!

KING. Madam! What's strange?

SECOND. The resemblance in form between you two. I am surprised to find how tamely he submits to you, a mere stranger.

KING. *Fondling the boy.* If he is not the son of a sage then he is an ornament of what race?

SECOND. Puru's race?

KING. *Aside.* Same as mine! That's why the lady says he looks like me. There is a family custom in our family,

Those who in earthly life are found

In places pleasures where abound,

At the foot of trees must lives end,

Their days in penance rigid spend.

*Aloud.* This place is not meant for mortals to come of their own accord.

SECOND. As the good sir says. He is related to the

nymphs. His mother was delivered here in the penance grove of the father of the gods.

KING. *Aside.* Now hope rises in my breast a second time. *Aloud.* Of what royal sage is that noble lady the wife?

SECOND. Who will mention the name of a deserter of his lawfully wedded wife?

KING. That can point to me alone. Would it be right to ask of his mother's name? *Reflecting.* Or rather, it would be impolitè to inquire about another's wife.

SECOND. Look at this pretty *shakanta* (bird's) loveliness.

BOY. *Locking.* Where's mother?

BOTH. The boy, fond of his mother, is deceived by the similarity of the names.

SECOND. Child, you have been asked to look at the lovely peacock.

KING. *Aside.* What! Is Shakuntala then his mother's name? But it is not uncommon for many to have the same name. Trust it is not a mirage stretched out before my eyes, no future trouble is in store for me.

BOY. Elder sister, I love the fine peacock. *Takes the toy.*

FIRST. *Looking at the boy with alarm.* Oh! The amulet is not on the wrist.

KING. Away with this excitement. Surely it must have dropped during the tussle with the cub. Here it is. *Desires to pick it up.*

BOTH. Don't indeed! Don't indeed touch it. What! He has done it! *Amazed they stare at each other placing their hands on breasts.*

KING. Why are we forbidden?

FIRST. Listen, O great king! None but parents can pick up the amulet called 'The Invincible' from the ground as it contains a powerful charm and was given to the boy at the



time of his natal ceremony by sage Marichi. No stranger can touch it when it falls to the ground.

KING. If one touches it, then ?

FIRST. Then he is sure to be bitten by a snake into which the herb in the amulet is turned.

KING. Have you seen the change take place ?

BOTH. More than once.

KING. *With joy. Aside.* Why won't I congratulate myself when my desire is fulfilled ? *Embraces the boy.*

SECOND. Suvrata, come, let us go and tell Shakuntala who is engaged in a religious observance. *Exeunt.*

BOY. Let me go to my mother.

KING. My son, you will greet your mother along with me.

BOY. Dushyanta is my father not you.

KING. *With a smile.* This contradiction convinces me.

*Enter SHAKUNTALA with her hair tied in a single braid.*

SHAK. *Thoughtfully.* I did not deem it possible that my luck would be transformed when I heard my son say that the herb in his amulet was not changed.

KING. *Seeing Shakuntala.* Oh, this is her ladyship Shakuntala indeed ! During separation for me

Dirty garments she wears,  
Single braid of hair bears,  
Her face is thin and pale,  
As was to her cruel !

SHAK. *Observing the king pale with remorse.* He is certainly not like my husband. Who is it then that defiled my son's body protected by an auspicious amulet ?

BOY. *Approaching mother.* Here is a man who embraces me saying, 'O son'.

KING. Dearest ! I have been so cruel to you but even

cruelty has borne good fruit at last as I find that you now recognise me.

SHAK. *Aside.* Heart! Be composed. Be composed. Has fate exhausted its spite and taken pity on me now? He is my husband indeed!

KING. Beloved! Fortunately you stand before me,  
Gone delusion, comes full recollection,  
O'er eclipse, with moon there's Rohini's union.

SHAK. Hail! hail to my lord! *Stops choked with tears and sobs when half said.*

KING. O beauteous one!

I see your lips once more  
Though not red like before,  
Your wishes impede, dear,  
(I'll prosper yet) your tear.

BOY. Mother, who's he?

SHAK. Child, ask your fate.

KING. Fairest, now remorse away fling,  
Strong delusion did circumvent,  
Thus act those who lose discerning,  
Th' blind may wreath mistake for serpent.

*Falls at her feet.*

SHAK. Rise, my husband, rise. Surely it was the result of my past life's evil deeds which doomed us to misery so long, made you forget all about me, though you were once so good to me. *King gets up.* My husband, how did you come to recollect this unhappy being?

KING. I shall tell you in a moment as soon as the dart of grief is extracted from my heart. Let me first wipe off the teardrop from your cheek which clings to your eyelashes, hurts your cheek, but which through infatuation was formerly ignored by me, then darling I shall be free from remorse  
*Does so.*

SHAK. *Seeing the ring.* My husband, that is the ring.

KING. This brought you back to my mind.

SHAK. What misery to me didn't its loss occasion ! I failed to convince you.

KING. Then let the creeper have the flower <ring> as a sign of its union with the season <spring>.

SHAK. I have lost faith in it. Let my husband himself wear it.

*Enter MATALI.*

MAT. I congratulate the king, he is happy at the reunion with his wife and the sight of his son.

KING. My desire has been fulfilled. Matali, surely, this is not known to Indra.

MAT. *Smiling.* What can be unknown to the gods ? Come long-lived one ! Venerable Maricha vouchsafes you an audience.

KING. Shakuntala, hold the boy. I desire to see the venerable sage with you in front.

SHAK. I feel shy to go near the elders in your company.

KING. On joyous occasions this practice should be observed. Come, come. *All proceed.*

*Enter MARICHA occupying a seat with Aditi.*

MAR. Dakshayani.

Here comes Dushyanta who helps gods with his bow,  
Thunderbolt of Indra's mere ornament so.

ADITI. His form is endowed with true dignity.

MAT. Long-lived one, see the parents of the gods are looking at you with affection as at a son. Approach them.

KING. Matali, is that the pair, son of Daksha and Marichi, separated but by one degree from the Creator, who is the source of all energy that sustains the universe, parent

of Indra, the principal sharer in sacrifices, from whom Narayana greater even than Brahma was born ?

MAT. Certainly.

KING. *Prostrating himself.* The servant of Indra bows to you both.

MAR. Child, live long, protect the earth,

ADITI. Son, be an unrivalled warrior.

SHAK. Along with my son I salute you.

MAR. Daughter,

Like Indra is your husband, like Jayanta son,  
Be ye like Shachi other blessing need none.

ADITI. May you be esteemed by your husband. May this long-lived child be an ornament of your house. Let all sit down. *All sit down round Marichi and Aditi.*

MAR. *Pointing to each.* Happily are virtuous Shakuntala, her good son and her husband, the greatest of kings, it seems like Action, Fortune and Wealth, the triad, here united.

KING. Venerable sage, I have had first the fulfilment of my ardent desire, then sight of you. It is all due to your great favour, for,

Fruit appears e'er after flower,  
Rises cloud first, then comes water,  
Cause, effect, come in this order,  
With me reverse through your favour.

MAT. Long-lived one, favour is ever showered thus by the progenitors of the world.

KING. Venerable sage, I married Shakuntala, obedient to your command according to *gandharva* rites but renounced her through lapse of memory when she was brought to me after some time by her friends. Thus I have offended your kinsman sage Kanva. Later on, this ring reminded me of the marriage. It seems so strange to me.

One may think it's not a tusker when sees with eyes,

Whether tusker or not doubt may in mind arise

When it has passed out of sight, then after seeing

Footprints goes away the doubt, there comes believing.

MAR. Child, it was not your fault. Your suspicion was rooted in a definite cause. Listen.

KING. I am all attention.

MAR. When Menaka becoming aware of her daughter's anguish owing to her repudiation after her descent in the sacred pool, came to Aditi with her, then from contemplation I came to know that your repudiation was due to Durvasa's curse. The curse was over when you saw the ring.

KING. *With a sigh of relief.* So I am absolved of all blame.

SHAK. *Aside.* Happily I was not disowned without good reason! Surely I do not remember to have been cursed, nor to have heard the curse, probably I was absent-minded then. That explains also why my friends directed me to show the ring to my husband.

MAR. Daughter, now that you have come to know the true facts, bear no resentment against your husband. For you see,

Lapse of memory made him harsh,

You were turned out because of curse,

Well, the gloom has now quite gone away,

O'er king now establish your sway,

On a dirty mirror isn't seen

Image, but is on one that's clean.

KING. As the venerable sage says.

MAR. Child, did you greet this son of yours whose natal ceremonies were duly performed by us?

KING. Venerable sage, in him I see the continuance of the royal line. *Takes the boy by the hand.*

MAR. He will also become a universal emperor. See,  
He will have no rival, will cross the seas,  
Warrior great, conquer the earth his main,  
Islands too ; wild beasts he tames here one sees,  
As world's support as Bharata will be known again.

KING. We surely expect all this from a boy whose natal ceremonies were performed by you, venerable sage.

ADITI. Let revered sage Kanva be informed of this happy union. Menaka, who dearly loves her daughter and is one of my attendants, is here.

SHAK. *Aside.* Indeed, my heart's desire has been stated by you venerable sage.

MAR. No doubt Kanva knows everything through the power of his austerities.

KING. That is why I was spared from his wrath.

MAR. We had better inform him of this happy incident all the same. Who's here ?

*Enter a PUPIL.*

PUPIL. Your Reverence, I await your command,

MAR. Galava, go to Kanva, tell him I have sent you to him with this joyous tidings—Dushyanta's curse has ended, he has regained his memory and accepted Shakuntala with her son.

PUPIL. As your Reverence commands. *Exit.*

MAR. Child, you now return to your capital with your wife and son in Indra's chariot.

KING. As the venerable sage commands.

MAR. May you gods delight and Indra on earth pour  
Beneficent showers for evermore,  
Sacrifices you perform and gods please,  
Spend the rest of your life on earth in ease,  
Thus you each on other benefits confer  
And do mutual good to each other.

KING. Venerable sage, I shall strive to the utmost in my power.

MAR. Child, what other favour can I bestow on you ?

KING. Is there anything more agreeable ? Yet let this be.

*Words of the Actor.*

May king e'er strive to do good to all men,  
Words of th' learned honoured be by all then,  
May the self-born Shiva, whose power does extend  
Over the sky and earth, my re-birth end.

*Exeunt all.*

*END OF ACT VII.*

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## VIKRAMA AND URVASHI.

Vikrama and Urvashi is a drama of pathos and not of passion. That the daughter of god would see that the son of man is fair and at once fall in love with him is somewhat strange but it speaks volumes for the dramatic skill of Kalidasa that a story of such exceptional character has been so happily delineated by him that it does not alienate our sympathy. Urvashi abjures heaven, abandons her child, for the sake of winning her lover and remaining with him. Pururava too is passionately in love with Urvashi. Strong as is the mutual attachment of the pair, more tender and touching is the queen's effacement of self, more poignant and painful the frenzy of despair, bordering on madness, that overwhelms the hero on his separation from the heroine. Without this element of pathos with a plain story of selfish love or unmanly infatuation this drama would not have attained the high level of perfection that it actually has.

There are several incidents in common between the *Shakuntala* and the *Vikramorvasi*. Thus, Shakuntala's foot is pricked by a thorn, Urvashi's necklace is caught in a twig of a tree, both the heroines send love epistles to the heroes, Indra's charioteer seizes the Jester in *Shakuntala* while a bird snatches away the magic stone in the *Vikramorvasi*. Shakuntala's son plays with a lion cub while Urvashi's with a peacock. But it will be observed that each of these incidents has been more artfully conceived and artistically executed in the *Shakuntala* than in the *Vikramorvasi*. In the delineation of character, in the denouement and the ending of the drama, the former is superior to the latter just as the latter in its turn is superior to Malavika and Agnimitra. This distinct superiority of the *Shakuntala* may justly lead one to regard that drama as having been written last when this the author's mental powers had reached their full maturity.

The story of Pururava and Urvashi is mentioned in the Vedas, in the form of a dialogue in the *Rigveda* (X. 95). A much fuller story is told in the *Shatapatha Brahmana* where we have an account both of the union and of the separation of the lovers and Urvashi's transformation into a water-bird, Pururava's mad search for and ultimate rescue of Urvashi. The several *Puranas*, like the *Matsya* (xxiv), *Vishnu* (iv), *Bhagavata* (ix), contain references more or less detailed, to the story, so it may be taken to have been a well-known one in Kalidasa's time.



## DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

### MALES.

AYUS	..	..	Son of Pururava and Urvashi.
CHITRARATHA	..	..	King of the Gandharvas.
GALAVA	..	..	Disciple of sage Bharata.
LATAVYA	..	..	The Chamberlain.
MANAVAKA	..	..	The Jester and king's companion.
NARADA	..	..	Sage of heaven.
PALLAVA	..	..	Disciple of sage Bharata.
PURURAVA	..	..	King of Pratishthana, the <i>hero</i> .
Stage-manager, Auxiliary Actor, Charioteer, Bards, Attendants, etc.			

### FEMALES.

AUSHINARI	..	..	The queen, daughter of King of Kashi.
CHITRLEKHA	..	..	A nymph, friend of Urvashi.
MENAKA	..	..	A nymph.
NIPUNIKA	..	..	Queen Aushinari's maidservant.
RAMBHA	..	..	A nymph.
SAHAJANYA	..	..	A nymph.
SATYAVATI	..	..	A female hermit.
URVASHI	..	..	A nymph, the <i>heroine</i> .

Nymphs, Female hunters, Yavani, Female attendants, etc.

### PERSONS REFERRED TO.

BHARATA	..	..	A sage of heaven.
CITY-GUARD	..	..	An officer of King Pururava.
CHYAVANA	..	..	A sage.
INDRA	..	..	Lord of the gods.
KESHIN	..	..	A demon.
UDAYABATI	..	..	Daughter of a demigod.

# VIKRAMA AND URVASHI.

## ACT I.

King Pururava returning from attendance on the sun hears a shriek uttered by some nymphs in the sky. Proceeding towards them he learns that nymph Urvashi has been carried off by a demon Keshin. He rescues her and restores her to her friends waiting on a peak of the Hemakuta mountain. Chitraratha, the gandharva king, sent by Indra, meets Pururava and congratulates him on his achievement. Love is kindled at first sight in the hearts of Pururava and of Urvashi.

As th' Upanishads say by embracing heaven  
And earth there's one truly called Lord, one person,  
Whom restraining vital breath those that seek  
Salvation, look for in their pure hearts meek,  
Meditation, faith, Whom can win, th' Great Lord,  
May salvation graciously He you accord.

*After benediction.*

MANAGER. *Looking towards tiring-room.* My worthy friend, come here.

*Enter an auxiliary* ACTOR.

ACTOR. Here I am, good sir.

MANAGER. Worthy friend, the audience has witnessed numerous plays by old writers. I wish to produce a new one by Kalidasa. Ask the actors to get ready with their respective parts.

ACTOR. As you say, good sir. *Exit.*

MANAGER. To the assembly learned in all arts let me just inform this. *Bowing.*

Out of regard for us, your humble friends, give ear,  
Or for the piece that is put up on the boards here,  
Or better still, out of respect for the great hero,  
To Kalidasa's pretty play with great attention, ho !

*Behind the scenes. A voice.* O whoever is a friend of the gods, if he can come up to the surface of heaven, may he protect us !

MANAGER. *Listening.* Hallo! What is this plaintive wail in the sky, like that of ospreys I hear no sooner I have finished my conversation? *Thinking.* Yes, I follow,

Celestial nymph sprung from Narayana's thigh,  
As was returning dancing before Kuber,  
Was made a prisoner by god's foes in sky,  
Her friends cry for help, th' plaintive note I hear.

*Exeunt both.*

END OF THE PROLOGUE.

*Enter CELESTIAL NYMPHS.*

NYMPHS. Sir, if there be any friend of the gods, if he can ascend the sky, save us, save us.

*Enter the KING in a chariot with CHARIOTEER*

KING. Needn't cry any longer. I, Pururava, am on my way back from attendance on the sun. Let me know what I am to protect you from.

RAMB. From the attack by a demon.

KING. What? Are the demons guilty of violence towards you?

MENAKA. O King! Listen. She who is a handy weapon of Indra whenever he is alarmed by the rigid penance of any one, who has shamed Lakshmi and Gauri proud of their beauty, who is an ornament of heaven, she, our dear friend Urvashi, while returning from Kubera's palace along with Chित्रalekha, has been made a captive, all of a sudden, just in midway, by the demon Keshin of Hiranyapura.

KING. Which way is the villain gone, do you know?

SAHA. To the north-east.

KING. Then you needn't worry any more. I shall try to recover your friend.

NYMPHS. *Joyfully.* Worthy deed of a descendant of a scion of the lunar race.

KING. Where will you wait for me ?

NYMPHS. On the peak of this Hemakuta mountain.

KING. Charioteer, drive the horses fast to the north-east.

CHARIOTEER. As the long-lived one pleases. *Does as ordered.*

KING. *Noticing chariot's speed.* Bravo ! Bravo ! The speed with which the chariot runs is fast enough to overtake Garuda even, though he has got a start, not to speak of an enemy of Indra. For,

The banner-cloth rests stiff on staff in gust,

The wheels turn all things on the track to dust,

Fast they run, spokes are doubled, yak tails there

On horses' heads seem lengthened and still e'er.

*Exeunt king and charioteer.*

SAHA. Friends, the king is gone, let us repair to the appointed spot.

THE REST. Be it so. *They all move toward Hemakuta peak.*

RAMB. Will the royal sage, you think, be able to extract the dart from our hearts ?

MENAKA. You need have no doubt.

RAMB. But forest fires are fierce things, cannot be easily put out.

MENAKA. Don't you know even Indra respectfully invites him from the earth and places him at the head of his victorious army.

RAMB. May he be victorious here in every respect.

SAHA. *After a moment's pause.* Cheer up friends cheer up. Yonder see a chariot with a flag bearing the sign of a deer spread out and playing in the air, that is the king's chariot. Surely, he will never come back unsuccessful. *All gaze at the King's banner.*

*Enter KING seated in chariot, the CHARIOTEER and URVASHI, terror-stricken, with eyes closed, supported by the arm of CHITRALEKHA.*

CHIT. Be of good cheer, be of good cheer, friend.

KING. Be composed, be composed, fair nymph, for,  
Gone the foe of gods, have no fear,  
Guards three worlds thunderbolt-wielder,  
Ope your large eyes, O timid one !  
As lotus petals ope in morn.

CHIT. Ah ! Why doesn't she, though alive because she  
is breathing, yet regain her consciousness ?

KING. Your friend is terribly frightened. For,  
Her heart like stem of flower frail,  
Trembles yet in fear and does quail,  
*Harichandana* paste 'tween her breasts there  
Swells and shows how throbs heart of th' fair,

CHIT. *Compassionately.* Friend Urvashi, compose your-  
self, compose yourself. You appear to me like a non-celestial  
being.

KING. Her gentle heart yet palpitates, can spy  
From tremor of garment's hem 'tween breasts I.

*Urvashi regains consciousness.*

KING. *Joyfully.* Chitralekha, your friend is coming to  
herself, see this fair-limbed one freed in her mind from the  
swoon

Now looks like night when moon drives the darkness,  
Her gloom now gone, she looks like flame smokeless  
As sun at night, or like Ganges river  
When mud's settled, water once more is clear.

CHIT. Be calm, friend. The wretches, the enemies of the  
gods, have been routed by the saviour of the distressed.

URV. *Opening her eyes.* What ! By Indra gifted with  
supernatural power ?

CHIT. Not by Indra but by this royal sage who equals  
Indra in might.

URV. *Looking at King. Aside.* The demons have surely rendered me a great service.

KING. *Closely observing Urvashi completely recovered. Aside.* It was quite in the fitness of things that all the nymphs sent by Indra to tempt the sage Narayana blushed when they saw the beauty of this lady as she was produced from his thigh. Or, methinks, she could not be the creation of a hermit.

Did Cupid himself create one so pretty ?

Or spring, rich in harvest of crop and flower ?

Or lovely moon make this surpassing beauty ?

How could old tranquil sage produce this fair ?

URV. O Chitralekha, where are our friends ?

CHIT. The king who has removed your fear can say.

KING. *Looking at Urvashi.* They look so distressed !  
See, madam,

For, at your parting, fair, who sees you once

Is sore, how much more an old acquaintance ?

URV. *In whispers.* Your words are surely worthy of a man of noble descent. It is but right, what wonder is it that nectar flows from the moon ? *Aloud.* So my heart longs to see my friend.

KING. *Pointing out with hand.*

See, friends, O fair, look from gold peak at you.

Concerned, as at moon freed from jaws of Rahu.

CHIT. Look.

URV. *Looking longingly at king.* Feeling pain in common is as if drinking me with both eyes.

CHIT. *Significantly.* Who is that ?

URV. The company of friends.

RAMB. *Joyfully.* Lo ! The king comes with our dear friend Urvashi accompanied by Chitralekha looking like the

moon when it is near the constellation Vishakha accompanied by Chitra.

MENAKA. *Observing carefully.* We have gained both our objects, our dear friend has been recovered and the king is unhurt in body.

SAHA. You speak rightly. The demons are indeed hard to beat.

KING. Here's that mountain peak, charioteer, get the chariot down.

CHARIOTEER. As the long-lived one commands. *Does as ordered, the car jolting Urvashi out of fear grasps the king.*

KING. *Aside, showing as if he was jolted.* This descent on a rugged surface is not without its compensation. For, owing to the jolting of the chariot this shoulder was touched by that of the slender-waisted one in such manner as to make my hair stand on end as if love has sprung into sprouts.

URV. *Bashfully.* Friend, just move a little.

CHIT. I can't.

RAMB. Let us go and pay our respects to the royal sage.

ALL. That is right. *The nymphs approach the king.*

KING. Charioteer, stop the chariot,

As spring meets the flowery creeper,

Wait till she meets her friends eager.

*Charioteer does so.*

NYMPHS. Luck has favoured your Majesty with victory.

KING. And you too as you meet your friend.

URV. *Getting down from the chariot leaning on Chitralekha.* Friend, embrace me closely. I did not expect to see my friends again. *Friends embrace quickly.*

RAMB. May your Majesty live long !

CHARIOTEER. O long-lived one ! A rattle is heard like that of the wheels of a chariot coming very fast from the north-east.

'Like cloud, streaked with lightning, there see someone

Wearing armlets of gold comes to mountain.

NYPHS. *Seeing.* Oh, it is Chitrathatha !

*Enter CHITRARATHA.*

CHITRARATHA. *Respectfully on beholding king.* Luckily, with great valour, you rendered a mighty service to Indra.

KING. Oh ! Is it the king of the *gandharvas* ? *Getting down from car.* Welcome dear friend. *They grasp each other's hand.*

CHITRARATHA. Hearing from Narada that Urvashi was carried away by Keshin Indra ordered the *gandharva* force to march to her rescue. Then from celestial musicians we heard the account of your victory so came here to see you. You should pay a visit to Indra along with Urvashi. Really, you have done a signal service to Indra, for,

Her creating she was given to Indra by Narayan,

You, his friend, have rescued her from hand of demon.

KING. Not so,

I did not Indra's enemy defeat,

It redounds all to Indra's credit,

Speaks for his strength, echo in cave

Of lion awes tusker big, brave.

CHITRARATHA. That's right. Modesty is an ornament of valour.

KING. Friend, I have no time to go to Indra just now, you better take Urvashi to him.

CHITRARATHA. As you please. Come this way, nymphs, this way. *Exeunt nymphs.*

URV. *In whispers.* I am unable to address my benefactor. Will you do so on my behalf ?

CHITRARATHA. *Approaching the king.* Friend, Urvashi desires to know whether she can take with her as her dear companion your Majesty's reputation with her to heaven.



KING. *Au revoir. Nymphs with Chitraratha go toward heaven.*

URV. *Meeting with some obstacle. Oh ! My necklace is caught in the twig of a creeper. Under this pretext she looks at king. Chitraleka, just release it.*

CHIT. *Smiling. Hopelessly entangled indeed, difficult to take it off, so it seems. You too try.*

URV. *Jokes apart, try.*

CHIT. *I will, no doubt.*

URV. *Remember these words of yours, friend. Tries to free necklace.*

KING. *Aside.*

*Thank you for stopping her a while, O ye creepers !*

*Gave me chance to see th'face with eyes turned to corners.*

*Necklace released by Chitralekha.*

CHARIOTEER. *O ye long-lived one !*

*See your missile hurls in sea the demon,*

*As snake it goes into quiver back again.*

KING. *Get the chariot here. Chariot is brought, king mounts it. Urvashi casts a glance at king sighing, then departs with friends, so also Chitraratha.*

KING. *Looking at the trail of Urvashi's chariot. Ah, Cupid ever aspires after the unattainable !*

*Into middle region of sky flying*

*Like a swan a lotus fibre pulling*

*Is nymph my mind out of body hauling.*

*Exeunt all.*

END OF ACT I.

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## ACT II.

The queen notices a change in the state of the king's mind and learns that it is due to his love for Urvashi. The king pining for Urvashi tries to seek relief by resorting to a pleasure garden but fails to find it there. Urvashi too, anxious to meet the king, sets out with her companion Chitralekha, comes to the pleasure-garden and remaining concealed overhears the conversation between the king and the Jester. Unable to restrain her passion she drops a letter before the king, then sends her companion to him and lastly appears in person. But soon after she is summoned back to heaven by a servant of Indra to take part in a dramatic performance. The king is overwhelmed with grief, the Jester tries to console him. The queen coming to see the king comes across the letter, picks it up, reads it and makes it over to the king. Burning with rage and jealousy the queen retires from the garden. In vain the king professes his love for her, protests his innocence or begs for forgiveness.

*Enter the JESTER.*

JESTER. I can no more control my tongue with regard to the king's secret than an invited *brahmana* can when a pot of rice boiled in milk is placed before him. Till the king rises from the judgment-seat let me rest in this rather secluded spot close to the palace. *Advancing stops.*

*Enter NIPUNIKA, a maidservant,*

NIP. I have been ordered by her Majesty : " Nipunika, ever since his return from attendance on the sun, the king is found to be very much absent-minded, so find out from his dear friend Manavaka the cause of his longing." But truly, how can I overreach that wicked *brahmana* ? Or perhaps, he won't be able to keep the king's secret to himself any more than the tip of a blade of grass can a dewdrop. However, let me find out where he is. *Advancing and looking.* There is seated revered Manavaka like a monkey painted in a picture. He is silent for some reason or other. *Approaching.* Reverend sir, I bow to you.

JESTER. Good betide you, Nipunika. *Aside.* I am bursting to disclose the secret to the naughty maid. *Aloud.* Madam Nipunika, aren't you having your music lesson? Where are you off to?

NIP. I have been sent by the queen to see you.

JESTER. What does her ladyship command?

NIP. Her Majesty says you have always been her friend and never neglected her when for some reason or other she was in trouble.

JESTER. *Deliberating.* Has any dear friend done anything which might offend the queen?

NIP. Who is the lady the king is pining for and in whose name he addresses the queen?

JESTER. *Aside.* What! The king has let out the secret himself. Then why should I experience pain by reason of the restraint on my tongue? *Aloud.* Was her Majesty addressed by the king as Urvashi? Ever since he met her his madness is not only troubling him but me also as he is abstaining from all amusements.

NIP. *Aside.* I have pierced the fastness of my master's secret. *Aloud.* What shall I then tell the queen, revered sir?

JESTER. Nipunika, in my name inform her Majesty, the daughter of the king of Kashi, that I shall try my best to wean the king from pursuing the mirage and then shall see the queen.

NIP. As revered sir commands. *Exit.*

*Behind the scenes. A bard.* Long live, long live, your Majesty.

You act like the sun, give light to people,  
And like the sun rest but just a little.

JESTER. *Hastening.* The king has left his judgment-seat and is coming here. Let me go and meet him. *Exit.*

END OF THE PRELUDE.

*Enter the king lovesick and the JESTER.*

KING. See Cupid's arrow has hit the mark, rendered  
Hole in my heart through which Urvashi has entered.

JESTER. The daughter of the king of Kashi has certainly  
been very much upset.

KING. Surely you have kept to yourself the secret  
entrusted to you.

JESTER. *Sadly. Aside.* Fie! Fie! I have been duped  
by that sly maid, otherwise the king would not have so asked.

KING. *With misgivings.* Why are you quiet? Has the  
mischief been done?

JESTER. I have kept my tongue so tied that I am not going  
to give even you an answer all at once.

KING. That's right. Now where can I soothe my soul?

JESTER. Why not in the kitchen?

KING. What's there?

JESTER. There the sight of the arrangements for cooking  
the five classes of things we take will drive your mumps away.

KING. *Smiling.* That might satisfy you as you long for  
those things but not me as I am hungering for an object  
difficult to obtain.

JESTER. Did not Urvashi actually see you?

KING. What then?

JESTER. Then I think it will not be difficult to obtain her.

KING. It is your affection for me that leads you to say so.

JESTER. My curiosity is enhanced by what you say. Is  
Urvashi unparalleled in beauty as I am in ugliness?

KING. Manavaka, to describe each limb of hers is im-  
possible. Briefly let me tell you—

JESTER. I am all attention.

KING. She's the ornament of ornaments,  
Jewel of all decoration,

Her fine beauty and attainments,  
Sure surpasses all comparison.

JESTER. Now I see that taking the vow of a *chataka* you pine for nectar of heaven.

KING. There is no shelter for a love-sick person other than a solitary place. Show me the way to the pleasure-garden.

JESTER. *To himself.* There's no help. *Aloud.* This way, this way, sir. *Advancing.* Here is the cool south breeze sent by the pleasure-garden to welcome you, a guest, sir.

KING. *Looking.* I realize the special character of the breeze,

It shakes *madhavi*, causes to dance jasmine creepers,  
Thus seems to me to behave it just like lovers.

JESTER. Such is also your frame of mind. *Advancing.* This is the gate of the pleasure-garden. Be pleased to enter, sir.

KING. You enter first. *Both enter.*

KING. *Looking in front.* Friend, I was not right in thinking that I would get some relief from my distress as soon as I entered the pleasure-garden.

Come for relief but, ah, where's the improvement ?  
Feel like one swimming hard against the current.

JESTER. Why pray ?

KING. I am crazy for one whom I can't get,  
Cupid my heart with five arrows has cleft,  
Mango blossoms when see swing in the air,  
Fire in my heart hundredfold, aye, does flare.

JESTER. Enough of lamentation. Cupid will soon give you pleasure by helping you to attain your wished for object.

KING. I am much obliged to the *brahmana* for his blessing.  
*Both go round the garden.*

JESTER. Look at the wonderful beauty of the garden indicating the advent of spring.

KING. Yes, I find it in each and every tree. For here,  
Black in sides, red in front, *kurabaka* flower,  
Mango blooms with pollens new yellow appear,  
Burst to blossom *ashoka* blooms in red colour,  
Stands spring beauty 'tween youth and childhood here.

JESTER. This *madhavi* bower having a marble seat on which are falling flowers coming in contact with bees is receiving you with flowers that have dropped from creepers overhead after honouring you. Pray oblige it.

KING. As you like. *Advancing! both sit down.*

JESTER. Sir, comfortably seated here, eyes gratified with the sight of lovely creepers, try to console your pang of separation a little.

KING. *Sighing.* Friend,  
Find no beauty now in creeper  
Though they 've blossomed, having seen her.  
Think of some means so that my wishes may be fulfilled.

JESTER. *Smiling.* The physician to Indra who was in love with Ahalya and I friend to you who is yearning for Urvashi are both mad men in this affair.

KING. Great attachment surely knows what to do.

JESTER. Let me think. Don't disturb my meditation with your lamentation. *Reflects.*

KING. *Represents seeing an omen, aside.*

Urvashi is hard to get but I long for her,  
For some reason Cupid's act yet is here,  
Heart feels glad as if will be fulfilled desire. *Looks hopeful.*  
*Enter URVASHI and CHITRALEKHA coming down from the sky.*

CHIT. For what unspecified reason are you going?

URV. You chaffed me when my necklace was caught in a creeper on the peak of Hemakuta and I was stopped from proceeding along the sky, then why do you ask me friend?

CHIT. What? Are you going to that royal sage Puru-rava?

URV. A shameless act on my part this!

CHIT. Whom did my friend send before?

URV. My heart.

CHIT. Better that you yourself should think well beforehand.

URV. Cupid surely urges me on. What is there to think about?

CHIT. Then I have nothing to add.

URV. So show the way that I may meet with no obstacle.

CHIT. Away with your anxiety. The magic taught us by the preceptor of the gods will keep us out of the reach of harm by demons.

URV. O! my heart forgot it. *Coming to the path of the siddhas.*

CHIT. Look, there stands the town of Pratisthana at the confluence of the revered Ganges and the Yamuna as if it is looking at its own reflection in sacred water, and there is its crowning jewel, the palace, where the king dwells.

URV. *Looking.* Surely it can be said that heaven has been transferred to the earth. Friend, where's the king, the friend of the distressed?

CHIT. Let us look for him by getting down in this pleasure-garden which is like a part of Nandana forest. *Both descends. Seeing with joy.* Behold, the king like the moon just risen expecting moonlight is waiting for you?

URV. *Seeing.* He looks lovelier than when I saw him first.

CHIT. No wonder. Shall we move up to him?

URV. Stationed by his side but keeping ourselves concealed by virtue of the charm let us listen to the secret conversation in which he is engaged with his friend.

CHIT. *Both do as said.*

JESTER. I have thought out a plan of coming into contact with one whose love is difficult to win. *King remains mute.*

URV. Who indeed is the lady who does not yield even when solicited by the king ?

CHIT. Why do you behave like a mortal ?

URV. I feel afraid of knowing all at once, through supernatural power.

JESTER. I can assure you I have thought out a plan.

KING. Tell me.

JESTER. Court sleep, you will meet her in dream, sir, or place a portrait of her ladyship Urvashi before you, that will soothe your soul.

URV. *Joyfully.* O heart, how void of courage you are ! Be composed, be composed.

KING. Both your suggestions are bizarre.

Hit by Cupid's arrows five how can rest,

Or sleep, or dream have this poor heart oppress ?

To portray's not possible for blow sighs,

Hot tears ere I finish flow from my eyes.

CHIT. Hear that ?

URV. Yes, but that's not enough for the heart.

JESTER. My ingenuity goes thus far.

KING. *Sighing.* Knows she bitter anguish that I suffer,

Knowing it can she ignore me ever ?

Well, let Cupid's five shafts victory win,

Fruitless be my longing then for union.

CHIT. Do you hear that ?

URV. Fie ! Fie ! That is how he regards me ! Yet I dare not appear before him and answer. Let me write a letter and drop it before him.

CHIT. I approve of it. *Urvashi hastily writing drops letter.*



JESTER. *Seeing.* Horror ! Horror ! What's that ? Who dropped this slough before us ?

KING. *Seeing.* It is a birch-leaf with letters written on it.

JESTER. May it not be a love-letter from that invisible body Urvashi disclosing her equal love to you ?

KING. There is nothing to which wishes do not extend. *Picking up the letter, reading it himself, joyfully.* Friend, you are right in your conjecture.

JESTER. Be pleased to read it out, sir : I would like to hear what is written in it.

URV. Bravo sir ! You are a polished gentleman.

KING. Listen. *Reads.*

If I am what you fancy me to be,  
For you do not know my heart, well, then see,  
That trees of Paradise give me no relief,  
Breeze in Indra's garden's fire is my belief.

URV. I wonder what he is going to say now.

CHIT. That is surely said already by his body thinned like a lotus-stalk.

JESTER. Luckily this hungry *brahmana* like a present obtained on pronouncing a blessing pointed out to you the letter which gave you relief.

KING. How can you talk of relief ?

With eyelashes upturned seems close her face  
Comes to mine, in heart love equal I trace,  
For that is what in sweet letter she says.

URV. We are equally in love then.

KING. In my hand the letter is getting smudged by perspiration, so you better keep it.

JESTER. *Taking it.* When she sees that the tree of your love bears flowers why is madam Urvashi suspicious about the fruit ?

URV. While my distressed heart anxious to meet the king  
I hold with patience, you better go and speak to him on my  
behalf.

CHIT. *Doing so, dispelling charm, approaching king.* Long  
live your Majesty.

KING. *Joyfully.* Welcome to you madam. Good  
lady,

Who has seen Ganges and Yamuna combined,  
Joy same in one alone doesn't find,  
Much as I rejoice you to see  
More I'd have liked here Urvashi to be.

CHIT. But, king, first clouds appear then flashes of  
lightning.

JESTER. *In whispers.* Why didn't Urvashi come? This  
lady is her companion, I believe.

CHIT. Urvashi bowing her head has sent me to inform you

KING. What are her commands?

CHIT. She says you alone acted as her saviour when she  
was attacked by the demon,

From the demon you did her deliver,  
Now have pity as love oppresses her.

KING. *Gentle lady,*

You think of your friend, not see how I'm affected,  
Love's shared by us, iron hot with iron hot's joined.

CHIT. *Approaching Urvashi.* Friend, come. I find Cupid  
is even more merciless to the king than he is to you, so I am  
come as his messenger.

URV. *Withdrawing the magic charm.* You have left me  
with a light heart.

CHIT. You will soon see who leaves whom. Now show  
courtesy to the king.

URV. *Bashfully.* Victory to king!

KING. O fair !

I have won, indeed, as you've said,  
But to Indra none have you so addressed.

*Takes her by the hand and helps her to a seat.*

JESTER. Madam, why don't you salute this old *brahmana* and friend of the king ? *Urvashi smiling salutes him.* May God bless you !

*Behind the scenes. A messenger from heaven. Chitralekha, let Urvashi hurry up.*

Compiled by sage Bharata, full of sentiments eight, aye,  
A drama's performance gods with Indra want to spy.

*All listen. URVASHI looks dejected.*

CHIT. Do you hear the voice of the messenger from heaven ? Please inform the king.

URV. *Sighing.* Words fail me.

CHIT. O king, this person is not the mistress of her own self, so she wishes, if permitted by your Majesty, to make herself blameless toward the gods.

KING. *Somehow finding words.* I don't want to stand between you and your master's business, but pray remember this person. *Urvashi exhibiting pang of separation departs with companion.*

KING. *Sighing.* Friend, vain are my eyes, now.

JESTER. *Desiring to show letter.* Surely this—*Left half-said. Aside.* Fie ! Fie ! I was so much struck with wonder at the sight of Urvashi that I did not know that the letter had dropped from my hand.

KING. Friend, what were you going to say ?

JESTER. Sir, needn't despair. Urvashi is so deeply attached to you that she can't forget you even if she be gone from here.

KING. I think so too. For at the time of her departure  
Though not mistress of self, left her heart, see,  
Through sighs shown by her heaving breasts, with me.

JESTER. *Aside.* My heart trembles lest the king should ask  
for the letter in a moment.

KING. With what shall I soothe my eyes? *Recollecting.*  
Ah! Bring that letter.

JESTER. *Representing dismay.* Alas! I don't find it. It  
has followed Urvashi.

KING. *Wrathfully.* Fools are always careless. Search  
for it carefully.

JESTER. *Rising.* Surely, it must be here. *Represents searching for it.* May be here, may be there.

*Enter queen AUSHINARI with NIPUNIKA, a maidservant and  
ATTENDANTS.*

QUEEN. Nipunika, did you really see my husband enter  
the pleasure-garden with revered Manavaka? .

NIP. Did I ever tell you a lie before, madam?

QUEEN. Hid behind the creeper let me overhear their  
secret conversation and find out if what you said was true.

NIP. As you please, madam.

QUEEN. *Advancing.* Girl Nipunika, what is that blown by  
the breeze and looking like a piece of clean rag?

NIP. *Observing.* Madam, it is a birch-leaf but there  
is some writing on it made visible by the leaf being turned  
round by the breeze. Alas! It has touched the tip of her  
Majesty's anklet. *Picking it up.* Why not read it?

QUEEN. You better read it first, if there's nothing un-  
pleasant, let me know.

NIP. *Doing so.* Your Majesty, it seems to be all about  
that scandal. It looks like a love-letter from Urvashi address-

ed to the king. Through the Jester's carelessness it has come to our hands.

QUEEN. If so, tell me what it says. *Nipunika reads it again.* With this letter as a present I shall see the nymph's lover.

NIP. As you please, madam. *Queen advances towards bower with attendants.*

JESTER. O friend, do I see it on the edge of the artificial mount near the pleasure-garden ?

KING. *Rising.* O adorable south breezee, friend of spring !

For the sake of perfume steal blooms' pollens of spring,

Why do you my lover's letter steal for nothing ?

Anjana courted you, know parting's grief scarce can bear

Lovers unless soothe minds with such trifles ever.

NIP. Your Majesty, they are looking for the letter.

QUEEN. I see that.

JESTER. It is a dry peacock's feather faded in colour and not the letter.

KING. Alas ! I am undone.

QUEEN. *Approaching.* Needn't be perturbed. Here's the letter.

KING. *Confused. Aside.* It's the queen ! *Aloud.* Welcome to the queen.

QUEEN. I am not welcome here.

KING. *In whispers.* Friend, what's the remedy ?

JESTER. *In whispers.* Caught red-handed, what answer is there ?

KING. *Queen,* we were not looking for this, but for something different (or for a touchstone.)

JESTER. Queen, get his meal ready, that will cure him of his bile.

QUEEN. See, how nicely is the king screened by his friend !

JESTER. You see even a devil is conciliated by a dinner.

KING. Fool, you are falsely accusing me of guilt !

QUEEN. You are not to blame, I am guilty in this affair, for I stand in front of you, thus thrust my unwelcome presence upon you. No more. I go from here. *Angrily prepares to depart.*

KING. Dispel your wrath, O fairest, for mine is the blame,  
When master's angry, servant is ne'er free from same,  
*Falls at her feet.*

QUEEN. *To herself.* Surely I am not so light-hearted as to care for his supplications. What I am afraid of is that for my unconciliatory conduct a wave of repentance might creep in later on.

*Leaving king exit with all attendants.*

JESTER. The queen is gone, turbid like a stream in rains.  
Rise now.

KING. *Getting up.* It is not unnatural, behold,  
Where love's absent vain are supplications, e'en though  
well stated,  
Jewellers can make out true gems from those that are just  
painted.

JESTER. It is good for you. A man with bad eyes can't stand the flame of a lamp.

KING. That's not it,

I love and respect queen as e'er, though engrossed I'm in  
fair Urvashi,  
She has slighted me, I'll be indifferent, see what does she.

JESTER. Hold your patience for some time yet. Have pity, sir, on a hungry *brahmana*. It is time to bathe and eat something.

KING. *Looking upwards.* Half the day is gone.  
 See peacocks rest near basins cool of trees ,  
 Break open *karnikara* buds, lie in them bees ,  
 Ducks leave hot water, to lotuses go ,  
 Cry caged thirsty birds for water so.

*Exeunt all.*

## END OF ACT II.

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## ACT III.

Urvashi, love-sick and absent-minded, is not seen at her best in the performance of the drama in heaven. Sage Bharata curses her, Indra says she may go to her lover Pururava but when she would see the face of her son she must leave him and the world. The queen meets the king and declares that she would live peacefully with any woman she loves or who longs for him and departs. Urvashi is present at the parting scene, at first an invisible witness to this interview then makes herself visible and is united with him. Her friend warns the king that she must not pine for heaven.

*Enter GALAVA and PALLAVA, two disciples of Bharata.*

GAL. Friend Pallava, when our preceptor left for Indra's palace you were made to carry his seat but I was asked to keep watch over the fire sanctuary, so I ask whether the performance of the drama before the gods was a success.

PAL. Galava, don't know whether they were pleased or not, but in the performance of the play of *Lakshmi-svayamvara*, composed by Sarasvati, Urvashi was absorbed in the various sentiments, but—

GAL. The concluding part of your statement implies a certain fault.

PAL. That's right. There was a certain fault due to Urvashi's inattention.

GAL. How pray?

PAL. Menaka playing the part of Varuni asked Urvashi playing the part of Lakshmi whom she liked best among the handsome gods assembled along with Keshava.

GAL. Then, then.

PAL. She blurted out Pururava when she ought to have said Purushottama.

GAL. Our senses follow what is destined to happen. Did not the preceptor get angry with her?

PAL. She was of course cursed by the preceptor but Indra took pity on her.

GAL. What did they say?

PAL. "As you have not followed my instructions you will have to leave celestial residence." That was the preceptor's curse. When the performance was over Indra told Urvashi whose head was bent down in shame, "Go to your friend Pururava who helps me in wars and to whom you are so attached. I ought to do something for that royal sage. So according to your desire betake yourself to Pururava until you see the face of your son."

GAL. The course of our conversation has made us offend against the preceptor's time for bathing. So let us go to him now.

*Exeunt both.*

END OF THE PRELUDE.

*Enter CHAMBERLAIN.*

CHAM. All try to earn while young, but in old age  
Leave their affairs to grown up sons to manage,  
But I in old age waste frame, know no rest,  
It's tough job tending women, 'tis, at best.



*Advancing.* I have been ordered thus by the daughter of the king of Kashi who has been keeping a certain religious observance in course of performance of a religious rite! "At the sacrifice of my self-respect I have already requested the king, now in my name inform him that I would like to see him as soon as his evening prayers are over.

*Advancing and looking.* From the king's palace the scene of the departure of the day is charming. For,

With offerings of flowers strewn in evening,  
How fine looks palace! Drowsy peacocks resting  
Seem to be painted birds, smoke out of windows  
Poured forth like pigeons in caves 'neath looks, glows  
Lamps lit by matrons which add to night's beauty,  
Let me go to king as it is my duty.

*Looking at the dressing room.* Ah! Here comes his Majesty. Maids with torches in hand attend him. His Majesty appears like a mountain in motion without its wings being clipped with the *karnikara* trees on its slopes. Let me wait where he might see me.

*Enter KING as described and JESTER.*

KING. *Aside.*

Passed day somehow, love-grief forgot steeped in state affairs,  
Nothing to do, how to pass th' night with its long hours!

CHAM. *Approaching.* Long live, long live, the king. The queen informs you that you can have a splendid view of the moon from the top of the jewelled palace. There in the company of your Majesty her ladyship would like to see the moon till its conjunction with Rohini.

KING. Latavya, as she wishes, so say to the queen.

CHAM. As your Majesty commands. *Exit.*

KING. Friend, do you think what the queen is going to do has anything to do with religious rite?

JESTER. I fancy she is seized with remorse at having slighted you when you prostrated yourself at her feet, and she intends to make amends for it.

KING. You are right, sir, in what you say, for,  
Proud women with repentance burn  
Ah ! When their husbands they do spurn,  
Secretly to make amends turn.

Show me the way to the jewelled palace.

JESTER. This way, this way to the jewelled palace. Ascend this crystal staircase which is like the waves of the Ganges. This palace is lovely at evening time.

KING. You ascend first. *All represent mounting of steps.*

JESTER. *Looking.* The moon will rise very soon, for the east looks bereft of darkness, in fact charming light is discernible in the east.

KING. Rightly observed, sir.

Lies concealed yet the moon on the mount's height,  
Chased by her beams are gone darkness of night  
Like hair dangling on the face of east, bright,  
All this charming beauty pleases my sight.

JESTER. Ho ! Ho ! Doesn't the moon look like a ball of sugar sliced off at one end ?

KING. *Smiling.* Strange, gluttons must always be thinking in terms of food ! *Bowing with folded hands.* Venerable lord of the night ! I bow

'To you, lord of stars, who shine to help th' pious  
To go through their rites, propitiate th' manes  
And gods with sweet nectar, darkness who dispel  
At night and who on lord Shivas's forehead dwell. *Rises.*

JESTER. Ho ! Your grandfather the moon through the words of this *brahmana* assents to your sitting down so that I too may comfortably sit down.

KING. *Holding the Jester, looking at attendants.* Now that

there is shining moonlight the light of lamps is superfluous. Rest yourselves.

ATTENDANTS. As your Majesty commands. *Exeunt.*

KING. *Looking at the moon.* Friend, the queen will shortly be coming, while we are alone let me disclose to you the state of my mind.

JESTER. That, of course, is apparent. Considering her deep love you may hold tight your soul in the bond of hope.

KING. True, but great too is the agony of my mind.

As current of stream is divided by rocks, so

My love checked makes it hundredfold in strength to grow.

JESTER. Though your limbs are drooping you look lovelier still. I think you will soon be united with him.

KING. *Indicating omen.* Friend,

In your hopeful words inspiration find,

Right arm throbs, both comfort bring to my mind.

JESTER. A *brahmana's* words are never false. *King cheers up.*

*Enter descending from sky URVASHI dressed as if going out for a rendezvous and CHITRALEKHA.*

URV. *Looking at herself.* What do you think of my blue silk dress and the few ornaments that I have got on.

CHIT. I don't find words enough to extol them. What I am thinking of is this : How I wish I was Pururava.

URV. Friend, Cupid orders you to take me to that charming person.

CHIT. Here we have come to your lover's palace looking like the Kailasa hill transferred to another place.

URV. Now find out by means of meditation where the robber of my heart is and what he is doing.

CHIT. *Meditating. Aside.* Let me have some jokes at her expense.

*Aloud.* In a pleasant garden fit for enjoyment your lover is having a nice time with his beloved whom he has obtained according to his wishes. *Urvashi looks dejected.* Stupid girl, how can he think about the company of any other beloved?

URV. I am narrow-minded, so suspicious.

CHIT. There you see the royal sage in the jewelled chamber. Let us approach him. *Both descend.*

KING. Friend, the torment of passion increases as the night advances.

URV. This ambiguous statement makes me tremble. Let us hear concealed their confidential conversation.

CHIT. As you please.

JESTER. Why not enjoy the moonlight which is sweet as nectar.

KING. Friend, such a malady is not to be cured by such remedies,

Neither bed of flowers, neither moonbeams  
Nor gem's string, nor sandal paste on frame, seems,  
Can dispel love's, torment that I suffer,  
Either that celestial nymph must come,—or—

URV. What's the other alternative?

KING. Or else she of whom we talk only in solitude can give relief.

URV. O my heart! See how you suffer for leaving me and becoming attached to him.

JESTER. O yes, I too when don't get venison at dinner console myself by thinking of it.

KING. But you get that.

JESTER. You also shall get your darling ere long.

KING. Friend, I think so too.

CHIT. Listen, O ye discontented! Listen.

JESTER. What is it you think?

KING. Owing to the jolting of the chariot when my

shoulder touched hers, the shoulder touched is the only limb that exists with reason, other limbs are a mere burden to the earth.

CHIT. Why do you tarry now?

URV. *Approaching hastily.* Though I stand in front of the king he seems to be indifferent.

CHIT. *Smiling.* Due to your haste you haven't withdrawn the charm still.

*Behind the scenes, a voice.* This way, this way, queen. *All listen.* *Urvashi becomes despondent along with her friend.*

JESTER. Ho! Here comes the queen. Keep your lips sealed.

KING. The expression of your face mustn't give me away.

URV. Friend, what's to be done now.

CHIT. What's the good of excitement? We are invisible. The queen too from her dress seems to be observing some fasting rule, so is not likely to stay long.

*Enter QUEEN and her ATTENDANTS with articles of worship.*

QUEEN. *Advancing and looking.* Nipunika, how much lovelier the moon looks when in conjunction with Rohini.

NIP. Surely his Majesty with your ladyship by his side will look even more charming. *Advances.*

JESTER. *Looking.* I do not know whether she has come to give me a present for pronouncing a blessing or to lay aside her wrath under the pretext of a religious rite thus making amends for her insulting treatment when you prostrated yourself before her. Her Majesty looks well pleased today.

KING. *Smiling.* Both are possible, but I agree with the latter alternative mentioned by you.

Clad in white silk raiment,

Having on plain ornament,

Decked with *durva* grass on hair,  
 Friendly now she does appear,  
 Gone her jealousy quite  
 'Cause of religious rite.

QUEEN. *Approaching.* Hail, hail to the king !

ATTENDANTS. Hail, hail to the king !

JESTER. May good betide you.

KING. Welcome to queen. *Taking her by hand making her sit down.*

URV. She is rightly addressed as 'queen.' In dignity she doesn't appear to be a whit inferior to Shachi.

CHIT. You are to be congratulated for not having turned your face away in wrath.

QUEEN. Placing you in front I have to go through a certain rite, so please put up with a moment's obstruction.

KING. Don't say that. It is a favour not an obstruction.

JESTER. May such obstruction with gifts on pronouncing blessings be frequent.

KING. What is the name of this religious observance?  
*Queen looks at Nipunika.*

NIP. Sire, it is called "Pleasing the Husband Ceremony."

KING. *Looking at queen.* If that be so,

Why then trouble your lotus-like tender body

with this vow ?

Why try to please the poor slave who's ever anxious

to please you.

URV. *Surprised.* Great is the king's respect for the queen.

CHIT. Silly girl, lovers who have transferred their affections to others are extra polite to their partners.

QUEEN. *Smiling.* Surely it is the effect of the vow that your Majesty is so nice.

JESTER. Pray be quiet. You ought not to oppose such fair words.

QUEEN. Girl, get the offerings here while I worship the moonlight that floods the jewelled palace.

ATTENDANTS. Here are the scented flowers and offerings.

QUEEN. *Worshipping moonlight with scented flowers and other offerings.* Girl, give these sweetmeats to revered Manavaka as a present.

MAID. As your Majesty directs. O revered Manavaka, these are yours.

JESTER. *Taking a plateful.* May good betide you. May you reap a rich harvest from your fast.

QUEEN. My lord, this way please.

KING. All right.

QUEEN. *Worshipping king, bowing with folded hands.* Here with Rohini and the moon as witnesses I propitiate my lord and swear that from today I shall live amicably with any woman whom my lord loves or who longs to be united with my lord.

URV. Don't quite understand the meaning of her words, yet my doubts are gone and heart is at ease.

CHIT. Friend, now the noble and chaste lady has agreed not to stand as an obstacle to your union with your lover.

JESTER. *In whispers.* When the fish escapes the disappointed fisherman baffled in his attempt shouts, 'This will redound to my credit'. *Aloud.* Is the king dear to you in the same manner?

QUEEN. Fool, at the cost of my own happiness I am trying to make the king happy. Just consider whether it is pleasing to him or not.

KING. O timid one!

May give me away or make slave of me,  
Swear I am not what you take me to be.

QUEEN. You may or may not, but I have finished the "Pleasing the Husband" ceremony as directed. Let us now go, girls.

QUEEN *about to depart.*

KING. How do you please me if you leave me?

QUEEN. My lord, I never transgressed a sacred rule before.

*Exit queen with all attendants.*

URV. The king is fond of his wife, but I can't take my heart away from the king.

CHIT. Why do you sink into despair again?

KING. *Approaching seat.* Friend, the queen could not have gone far.

JESTER. You can confidently say what you wish to. Like a physician giving up a case she has given you up of her own accord.

KING. Would that Urvashi—

URV. *Aside.* I am happy today.

KING. If hidden fair's tinkling bells reach my ear,  
Her soft hands from behind my eyes cover,  
Or her maid force her 'fore me to appear  
In the palace if she fear to come here.

URV. Let me now fulfil this wish of his. *Goes behind the king and closes her eyes. Chitrlekha makes sign to Jester.*

KING. *Experiencing sensation of touch.* Friend, it must be the nymph born of Narayana's thigh.

JESTER. How can you make that out?

KING. There is no doubt, for

My afflicted soul can give such joy none,  
Moon can lily open, never the sun.

URV. *Removing her hands rises, approaching a little.*  
Long live, long live, the king.



KING. You are welcome fair. *Seating her on same seat.*

CHIT. Friend, Are you well ?

KING. I would be so just now.

URV. The queen has given the king away to me, so like a sweetheart I am in close contact with his body. Don't take me to be too bold.

JESTER. What have you been doing here since the evening ?

KING. *Looking at Urvashi.*

If embrace me as queen from me did part,  
By whose leave, say darling, you stole my heart.

CHIT. Friend, you have silenced her, now listen to one word of mine.

KING. I am all attention.

CHIT. Summer will follow spring. I have to attend upon the sun. Take care that my friend Urvashi does not yearn for heaven.

JESTER. What is there in heaven to make one pine for it ? No food, no drink, only keep on staring like fish with wink-ess eyes.

KING. Good sir !

Is there any limit, aye, to heaven's pleasures ?  
How can I stop surging in your heart its treasures ?  
All that I can do is truly promise to you  
Ne'er to go to other women, to you be true.

CHIT. I am much obliged. Now my dear Urvashi bid me goodbye with a joyous heart.

URV. *Embracing Chitralekha.* Friend, don't forget me.

CHIT. *Smiling.* Now that you are joined with friend, I ought more fittingly to make that request to you. *Exit bowing to king.*

JESTER. Luckily your desire is fulfilled today.





KING. Yes, I am supremely happy now. Behold,  
Proud chiefs bowing at my footstool  
Tinged by gems their diadems full,  
Lordship sole of my vast empire,  
Never made me happy entire  
As I feel I should be waiting  
As a slave to my Urvashi darling.

URV. I haven't the power to say anything sweeter than this.

KING. *Takin Urvashi's hand.* Strange, the fulfilment of desire gives rise to opposite feelings.

Moonbeams gladden me now,  
Pleases me Cupid's arrow,  
What was to me painful  
Is now gay and joyful.

URV. I have sinned against your lordship not coming to you before.

KING. That is not so.

After pain far sweeter pleasure to me does seem  
As one coming from sun shade more pleasant does deem.

JESTER. O lady! You have long enjoyed the rays of the moon, surely now it is time to get inside the room.

KING. Show your friend the way.

JESTER. This way, this way, madam. *They proceed.*

KING. Now this is my earnest wish, fair.

URV. What pray?

KING. Night seemed ever so long when you weren't here,  
How I wish it would stay as long now, dear.

*Exeunt all.*

END OF ACT III.

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## ACT IV.

Urvashi's friends learn that annoyed with her husband she has entered the Kumara forest and has at once been changed into a creeper. The king, mad with grief, asks of the peacock, the cuckoo, the bee, the elephant, etc. if they know of Urvashi's present whereabouts but failing to get a satisfactory answer, in despair, falls into a swoon, when a voice from heaven tells him of a magic stone which he picks up and with which he clasps a creeper when lo! it is turned into Urvashi. They return to their dominion.

*Enter CHITRALEKHA disconsolate and SAHAJANYA.*

CHIT. *Singing.* How sad the lot of two swans on lake today.  
How one weeps because the other is away.

SAHA. *Seeing Chित्रलेखा.* The poor appearance of your face like that of a faded lotus bespeaks uneasiness of mind. Tell me what it is due to, so that I may share it.

CHIT. I am anxious for Urvashi, because in the order of rotation of the service of nymphs it is my turn to attend upon the worshipful sun, so I shall have to leave Urvashi.

SAHA. I know your mutual attachment, then, then.

CHIT. Then in order to find out how she is getting on just now I came to know through meditation of a great calamity.

SAHA. *Agitated.* Of what sort?—

CHIT. It appears that intrusting the affairs of the realm to his ministers the royal sage unaccompanied by any female except his love has gone to the Gandhamadana forest for spree.

SAHA. An ideal place for enjoyment.

CHIT. There, on one occasion, Urvashi became angry with the king because he kept staring at Udayavati, the daughter of a demi-god, who was playing on the sandy bank of the Mandakini by making sandhills there.

SAHA. Such is fate. Intense love, it appears, is intolerant.

CHIT. Rejecting the apology of her husband she entered the Kumara forest oblivious of the fact, by the curse of her preceptor, that it should be shunned by women. As soon as she entered her form was changed into that of a creeper standing on the edge of the forest.

SAHA. Nothing is inviolable to fate. Alas ! that this dire calamity should overtake such deep attachment ! How is the king now ?

CHIT. He is spending days and nights in that very forest thinking of his sweetheart. Now clouds are seen in the sky, they make even the happy uneasy, surely they would intensify the anguish of one whose heart is full of sorrow.

SAHA. Friend, persons of such distinguished appearance do not suffer for long. Assuredly some sort of divine favour will effect their union once more. So come, let us wait on the worshipful rising sun.

*Exeunt both.*

### END OF PRELUDE.

*Enter KING dressed like a maniac.*

KING. Halt ! Wicked demon, halt ! Where do you run away with my darling ! Ah ! Rising to the sky you are shooting arrows at me from the top of the mount. *Thinking.*

It's not a demon proud,  
It is but new raincloud,  
Not archer's mighty bow,  
It is in sky the rainbow,  
It's rain, not arrow's shower,  
It's lightning, not Urvashi dear.

*Reflecting.* Where is the one gone whose thigh is like plantain-tree ? Enraged with mē she has in some mysterious way kept herself concealed somewhere through her divine power. No, she is never angry with me for long. Has she then returned to heaven ? No, that is not possible for her

love is deep for me. Nor can the enemies of the gods dare take her away while I am here, yet she has become invisible to my eyes. What an act of fate ! *Looking on all sides, sighing.* Misfortunes never came singly to one who is down in his luck. Alas my fate !

There's grief intense from parting with beloved,  
Now promise fine days by clouds heat removed.

*Laughing.* In vain I suffer from this increasing agony of mind. Sages say that kings cause seasons. Well, shall I then prevent the advent of the rainy season ? No, these signs of the rainy season are the only royal insignia that do me honour. Thus,

Clouds decked with gold is my canopy bright,  
The tall waving cane reed blossoms fan me,  
Like bards peacocks sing my praise with great delight,  
Bring like merchants treasures hill-streams, I see.

Well, why do I vaunt of regalia ? I ought to be searching my beloved now in the wood. Alas ! Here is an aggravation of my distress when I am resolved to make the search. For, Bright red blossoms, marked with red lines, drenched with water, Me remind of her eyes full of tears, through anger.

How can I trace her if she has gone this way ?  
If trod this path heavy-hipped the fairest of fair,  
Damped by cloud the sand her feet's red lac mark would bear.

*Advancing and seeing. Joyfully.* I have got a clue at last to the path followed by the angry lady.

Ah ! Here's her breast-garment dropped as she walked with  
rage turned quite blue,  
Spotted with tears trickling down lips taking away their red hue.

*Thinking.* Alas ! It is but fresh green sward with *indra-gopas* on it. Where can I find news of my beloved in this lonely forest ? *Seeing.* Ah ! Perhaps she has ascended the stone slab on this rocky soil emitting vapour on account of

heavy downpour. There's a peacock staring at the clouds with its neck outstretched, filling all sides with its loud shrieks, while its tail is fluttering in the strong breeze. *Approaching.* Very well, let me just ask it.

Blue-necked peacock ! In this wood my long-eyed darling  
Did you see ? She to see me sure now is longing.

Why does it start dancing without giving me a reply ?  
What indeed is the source of its joy ? *Reflecting.* Well, I see,  
Wife's thick dark tress loosed in sport looked, ah, so lovely !  
Gone that rival, it displays its feathers bravely.

Let that be. I shan't ask one that exults in another's  
misery ! *Advancing.* Here's a cuckoo seated on a branch  
of the *jambu* tree in the cool of the evening. It is the wisest  
race among birds. Let me just ask it.

Cuckoo ! You're th' messenger of love, lovers say so,  
Your unerring skill in taming their pride e'er show,  
Quickly bring here my beloved where'er she may be,  
Or sweet warbler ! Kindly take me where'er is she.

What's it you say ? Why she left me when I was so  
devoted to her ? Listen then,

She was angry with me for no cause whatever,  
On the slightest pretext woman is with lover,  
Though from true love did not deviate I ever.

What ? Engaged in her own business she cuts short my  
conversation !

Trouble of one doesn't affect another,  
Leaves him quite cold , plunged in distress I'm here,  
Tastes rose-apple fruit, at me bird doesn't wink,  
Passion-blind as sweethearts lower lips drink.

Though it is so, with this cuckoo sweet-voiced like my  
beloved I shan't be angry. Be you happy. Well, let me go  
from this place. *Advancing and listening.* Ah ! I hear notes



like those of the anklet-bells of my beloved. Thither just let me go. *Advancing.* Alas ! Alas !

They are not the bells on her feet that are tinkling,

Oh no ! They are just swans to Manasa like returning.

Let it be so. So long as these birds eager to go to Manasa lake do not fly away from the pool let me ask them about the whereabouts of my beloved.

*Approaching.* O monarch of water birds !

Tell me of my dear one, the good prefer

To further others' and not their own welfare.

Drop lotus-stalk, retake it 'fore you leave,

Give me wife's news, just me of pain relieve.

You must have seen her, I am pretty sure,

Her gait you imitate so her restore.

As this bird turns its face toward sky it seems to say, "I didn't see her as my mind was fixed on the Manasa lake" then,

Swan ! If she was not seen by you somewhere,

How could copy you, say, gait of the fair ?

Further !

You have stolen her gait, so restore her,

When part is found thief whole must make over.

*Laughing.* It flies away in fear because the king punishes thieves. *Advancing.* Well, here's a *chakravaka* in the company of its mate, let me just ask it.

O *chakravaka* ! Like chariot-wheel's my wife's frame round,

Oppressed by desire I ask where she will be found.

What ! It asks "Who is he !", "Who is he" ? No, I have failed. I am not known to him even !

The sun is my grandfather and moon too,

Married Urvashi and this earth as my wives two,

It is silent. Well, I must chide it.

When your mate's concealed in lake in lotus-leaf,

You deem she's far from you, so shout in grief,

So afraid to part, so deep your love, see,

Robbed of wife don't pity me, say where's she !

Verily my evil stars are in the ascendant now. I shall try my luck elsewhere. *Moving a step.* Perhaps it would be better not to move. Look ! The lotus enclosing a bee humming within it resembles my wife's face making a hissing sound when I bite her lower lip. Well, let me request this bee seated on the lotus, if only to avoid repentance creeping in later on. O bee ! Give me news of my wife of ravishing eyes.

If you fragrance of her breath had smelt, if seen her,

How could leave th' fair, fix your love on lotus ever ?

But let me go. *Advancing.* Here's a mighty tusker with his trunk lying on a branch of *nipa* tree standing with his mate I might get some news from him of my beloved. *Seeing.* Well, better not be in a hurry

Let him taste branch of *shallaki* tree brought by spouse,

On its fresh juice, sweet as liquor, carouse.

*Waiting only for a moment.* He has finished his meal. Now I will question him.

Lord of tuskers ! Did you see a charming girl here,

E'er young, best of women with *yuthika* flower on hair ?

*Joyfully.* Your deep sonorous sound inspires me with hope that I shall recover her. I love you a lot as our natures are similar.

I am king of kings, you of elephants,

Much rut you shed like my gifts to suppliants,

Gem of women my Urvashi I love best,

In your whole herd this mate is your dearest.

There is so much in you that looks like mine,

May the pain I feel that never be thine !

May you be happy ! But let me go. *Casting glances on one side.*

Well, here's seen a beautiful mountain called the Surabhi-kandara, the favourite haunt of nymphs. Shall I come

across that girl of beautiful form at the foot of that mountain ?  
*Advancing and looking.* Such is my sad luck that even the clouds have no lightning. However, I shan't go back without asking this mountain.

Oh mount ! Love's abode ! Does my love here rest  
 With her charming hips, joints, prominent breast ?

It is silent, probably on account of the distance it can't hear me. I shall go near it and ask again. *Advancing.*

In this charming forest, mount, did you see  
 Lovely, fair-limbed girl who's parted from me ?

*Listening. Joyfully.* What ? Does it say, "I saw a girl exactly like that ? You may hear something more pleasant than that." Then where is my beloved ? *Hearing voice from behind the scenes.* Fie ! It is my voice resounding from a cavern. *Dejectedly.* I feel tired. Let me sit by the side of the hill-stream and enjoy the cool breeze, it pleases me, turbid though it is on account of the rains.

Think its ripples are like knitted eyebrows,  
 Form her girdle the birds floating in rows,  
 Foams are garment falling off as in wrath  
 She threads her way through uneven woodpath,  
 Surely, angry Urvashi is changed to river,  
 Thinking in her mind of my fault for e'er.  
 Well, let me ask it. *With folded hands.*

O Urvashi ! What fault did you find in your slave ?

Why shut out from view ?

My love's firmly fixed in you, my darling, to you I am true.

Or perhaps it is really a river. Urvashi will surely never forsake Pururava and proceed toward the sea. Good fortune does not come from lamenting. Let me now return to the place whence she disappeared from my view. *Advancing and looking.* Ah ! Here I see traces of her footsteps.

Here's red *kadamba* bloom which says summer's gone,  
Seems wife uses it her hair to adorn.

*Looking.* Let me just ask this spotted deer seated here for  
some news of my wife.

Stag of many hues ! Are forests' eyes you,  
'Through you woodland does the scenery view.

*Looking.* How it insults me by turning away its face !

*Looking.* Or perhaps it keeps gazing at its mate as it approach-  
es with its suckling. O'lord of the herd !

Did you see my love here left behind

Fair, with long eyes like those of hind ?

What ? Ignoring my request it stays on with its mate !  
I quite follow. Naturally when there is a change for the worse  
in one's lot one meets with rebuffs. Let me go away from  
this place. *Advancing and looking.* What's this I find here ?

It isn't a piece of mangled flesh here left

By lion, nor streak of fire nor of light,

For all wood is drenched, red like *ashoka* flower,

No, it isn't any, it is brighter far.

Its steals my mind. Let me have it.

But ah ! Where's she whose hair scented with *mandara* flower  
It would have adorned, then why soil it with my tear ?

*Behind the scenes.* Child, do take it, do take it.

Got from red lac dye to Parvati's feet applied

It does bring about union with beloved.

KING. *Listening.* Whose voice do I hear ? *Looking around.*  
Some holy ascetic living the life of a deer has taken pity on  
me. I am grateful to you for this advice, O worshipful one !  
*Taking the gem.* O gem of union !

Gem if bring my slender-waisted love back to me,

As crest-jewel like moon on Shiva's head will rest ye.

*Advancing and looking.* Why does love swell in my heart

at the sight of this creeper destitute though it is of flowers ?  
Or perhaps, it is right that it should delight my mind,

Wet with water looks like my love, I fear,  
Is whose lower lip washed with drops of tear,  
Bare the creeper, wholly void of flowers,  
Looks like beloved ornament who none wears,  
Flowering time o'er, bees have ceased to hum,  
It looks like wife me ignoring cross, mum.

Let me taste the delight of embracing it which resembles  
my wife.

*Embraces creeper. Enter URVASHI on that very spot.*

KING. *Eyes closed but representing pleasure of touch.* Why  
am I experiencing the joy of touch of Urvashi ? I can't believe  
it, though. For, oft I fancied meeting my beloved before,  
but alas ! it turned out to be something different. I will not,  
therefore, open my eyes to have a look at one whom by  
touch I believe to be my beloved. *Gradually opening eyes.*  
Why ! It is really my love.

URV. *Shedding tears.* Long live, long live, the king.

KING. Parted from you, dear, was steeped in darkness,  
Getting you have now recovered senses.

URV. Excuse me king, under the influence of anger what  
torment must not I have inflicted upon you ?

KING. You need not apologise, your very sight sends a  
thrill of joy through my frame. Tell me how you could stay  
away from me so long. I begged of all I came across in this  
wide world to tell me where you were.

URV. Yes, I knew all about it, for my senses were not  
wholly dead.

KING. How do you mean ?

URV. Listen. When lord Kartikeya took the vow of  
perpetual celibacy he prohibited the entry of women in this

portion of the Gandhamadana mountain and laid down that if any woman did she would be turned into a creeper and would only regain her former form if touched by a stone produced from Parvati's feet. Under the influence of rage and that of sage Bharata's curse I forgot all about this prohibition, so no sooner I got in than I was changed into a creeper.

KING. I see.

How could you, O dear, pang of separation bear ?

Tired when slept beside you, had gone far you did fear.

I have got you by the power of a gem which a sage told me would help me, as you were saying, to recover you.

URV. It is that gem indeed. That is why I got back my old form as soon as you, king, embraced me. *Taking jewel placing it on head.*

KING. My darling ! Stand thus a while.

Your face, brightened by gem which crest does adorn,

Looks like lotus shining in sun at morn.

URV. Dearest, it is long since you left Pratishthana, your subjects would surely be angry with me, so let us go back.

KING. As you please, madam. \*

URV. How would your Majesty like to go ?

KING. Take me back in an aerial car,

Decked with rainbow, lightning for its streamer.

*Exeunt all.*

END OF ACT IV.

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## ACT V.

Shortly after the king's return the gem is carried away by a vulture. Then a report reaches the king that the bird has been killed and the gem recovered, the arrow which hit the bird bears the name of Ayus, son of Urvashi. The king is lost in wonder as he did not know that Urvashi ever gave birth to a child. Just then a female ascetic comes with a boy. The king is told that he is Urvashi's son. Urvashi sees him and starts weeping, because, as she says, her time on earth is up. While all are grieving, particularly Urvashi and the king, Narada comes down from heaven and says that Urvashi may stay on for the rest of his life. Ayus is installed as the Crown prince by Narada and the celestial nymphs.

*Enter the JESTER satisfied.*

JESTER. Fortunately the king has returned with Urvashi at last after sporting in the Nandana and other forests and by kind treatment pleasing his subjects is discharging his duties now. He lacks nothing except a son. This is an auspicious day, so bathing with his queens at the confluence of the sacred Ganges and the Yamuna he has just gone to his tent. There let me go and partake of the first portion of the perfumes and flowers with which he is being decorated. *Advancing.*

*Behind the scenes. A voice.* Woe! Woe! While being carried by me on a palm leaf covered with a piece of white silk a vulture carried off the crest-jewel of the charming mistress dear to the king's heart, mistaking it to be a piece of flesh!

JESTER. *Listening.* What a calamity! That crest-jewel which brings about union was highly prized by the king, therefore, my friend leaving his seat before finishing his toilet is coming this way. Let me go to him.

*Enter the KING with ATTENDANTS excited.*

KING. Where is the brigand bird that seeks death, so commits the first theft in the house of the king who protects all?

FEM. HUNTER. There is the bird with the gem, holding it by a gold thread in its beak, circling in the sky it seems to be drawing red lines there.

KING. I see it.

Held by gold thread with the flaming gem bird in sky is circling,  
By its quick flight looks like bracelet of fire or firework  
wheeling.

What's to be done now ?

JESTER. *Approaching.* Why should mercy be shown to it?  
The culprit deserves to be punished.

KING. You are right. Give me the bow, the bow. Quick.  
*Exit Yavani to bring bow.* I can see the bird no longer.

JESTER. The wicked carrion-eater has flown from this place  
in an easterly direction.

KING. *Turning and looking.* Now I see it,  
Shines bright that quarter with gem's lustre  
As if illumed with ashoka flower.

*Enter YAVANI with bow in hand.*

YAV. My lord, here is the arm-guard and here is the bow.

KING. It is no use now, the flesh-eater has gone beyond  
the range of arrows. For,

Midst dark clouds hid at night bird looks like Mars,  
When the planet near a sombre cloud appears.

*Seeing Chamberlain.* Latavya, tell the City-guard in my  
name to search for the bird when it goes to its nest on a tree in  
the evening.

CHAM. As your Majesty commands. *Exit.*

JESTER. Pray now sit down, sir. Where can the jewel-  
stealer go and escape from punishment by you ?

KING. *Sitting down with Jester.*

Gem I prize not because it's fine  
But as has brought back darling mine.

JESTER. You have already said so to me.



*Enter CHAMBERLAIN with the gem and an arrow.*

CHAM. Long live, long live your Majesty.

Here's bird pierced by your might in form of dart,

For its dire offence has met with due desert.

*All look surprised.* The gem has been washed with water,  
to whom shall I hand it over?

KING. Let it be purified in fire and kept in a basket.

FEM HUNTER. As your Majesty pleases. *Exit female hunter with gem.*

KING. Latavya, do you know whose arrow it is?

CHAM. There is a name inscribed on it but my eyes fail to read it.

KING. Bring the arrow to me. *Chamberlain does so, king reading it exhibits delight of having a son.*

CHAM. Permit me to attend to my duty. *Exit.*

JESTER. What is worrying you?

KING. Listen to the name of the bird-killer,  
This is the dart of Ayus, wielder of bow,  
Pururava and Urvashi's son; destroyer of foe.

JESTER. *Joyfully.* Through good fortune you have been blest with a son.

KING. Friend! How is this? Except on the occasion of a certain sacrifice in Naimisha forest I was never away from Urvashi and I never noticed any sign of pregnancy. How could a son be born then?

For some days her eyes did dark appear,

Nipples black, face of pale colour.

JESTER. Human attributes, you mustn't think sir, characterise the immortals. Their doings are concealed by their supernatural powers.

KING. May it be just what you say. But what could be the reason of her concealing the child?

JESTER. Who can divine the secret of the gods?

*Enter CHAMBERLAIN.*

CHAM. Long live, long live, the king. A female ascetic with a boy from the hermitage of Chyavana wishes to see your Majesty.

KING. Bring them here without delay.

CHAM. As your Majesty pleases. *Exit Chamberlain.*

*Re-enter CHAMBERLAIN with FEMALE ASCETIC and a BOY with a bow in hand.*

CHAM. This way, this way, madam. *All advance.*

JESTER. *Looking.* Is this the *kshatriya* prince who shot the bird with an arrow on which his name was engraved?

KING. Quite likely. For,

Why do eyes shed tears at his sight?

Why heart's filled with love, mind with delight?

To embrace him why feel I inclined?

Hands shake too—why do these I find?

CHAM. Wait here, madam. *The female ascetic with boy halts.*

KING. Mother, I bow to you.

FEM. ASC. Illustrious sir, may the lunar line multiply through you! *Aside.* Though not told one can see the connection between this boy and the royal sage. *Aloud.* Child, bow to your father. *Boy bows with folded hands holding bow in hand.*

KING. May you live long!

BOY. *Aside.* Hearing loving words as father him know,

What love in one reared on sire's lap does grow?

KING. Worthy lady, what brings you here?

FEM. ASC. O great king, this long-lived Ayus was entrusted to our hands soon after birth by Urvashi who must have had some reason for doing so. Revered sage Chyavana has duly performed the natal ceremonies appertaining to a *kshatriya* prince. He has finished his studies and is well trained in archery.

KING. Then he is blest with a protector.

FEM. ASC. Going to gather fuel and flowers to-day with other hermit boys he broke a rule of the hermitage,

JESTER. Of what sort?

FEM. ASC. He killed a vulture that rested on a tree holding in its beak a piece of flesh. *Jester looks at king.*

KING. Then, then.

FEM. ASC. Revered Chyavana coming to hear of this incident ordered me to restore the trust property, so I would like to see queen Urvashi.

KING. Pray be seated. *They sit down.* Latavya, call Urvashi.

CHAM. As your Majesty pleases. *Exit.*

KING. *Looking at the boy.* Come, my son, come.

Touch of a son, they say, through whole body sends thrill,  
Moonbeams gladden moongems, so me with delight fill.

FEM. ASC. Child, cheer your father. *Boy going to king touches his feet.*

KING. *Embracing child and placing him on footstool.* Child, salute without being frightened this *brahmana*, the friend of your father.

JESTER. Why will he be frightened? He has surely seen a monkey while staying in the hermitage.

BOY. *Smiling.* I salute you father.

JESTER. May good betide you.

*Re-enter CHAMBERLAIN and URVASHI.*

CHAM. This way, this way, madam.

URV. *Seeing the boy.* Who is the boy sitting on king's footstool and the knot of hair on whose head the king himself is tying up? *Seeing the female ascetic. Aside.* Ah! That is Satyabati, so it seems this is my little child Ayus. He has shot up. *Advances.*

KING. *Looking at Urvashi.*

- Here's your mother, keen on looking at you,  
Love effusing breast-cloth's damped, one can view.

FEM. ASC. Boy, go forward to meet your mother. *Boy goes to mother.*

URV. Mother, I bow to your feet.

FEM. ASC. Child, be your husband's darling.

BOY. Mother, I bow to you.

URV. *Lifting child's face and embracing.* Be dutiful to your father, child. *Approaching.* Long live, long live, your Majesty.

KING. Welcome to mother, be seated here. *Offers half his seat, all are seated in due order.*

FEM. ASC. Ayus has gone through his course of instructions. He is now of an age to put on armour, so I return my charge in the presence of your husband. Now I wish to bid you good-bye, my stay here interferes with my duties in the hermitage.

URV. Meeting you after a long time my desire to see you has become more intense. I can't let you go, yet feel it wrong, to detain you. You had better go then, revered madam. *Au revoir.*

KING. Tender my respects to venerable Chyavana, mother.

FEM. ASC. Very well.

BOY. Mother, if you are really returning you should take me back also to the hermitage.

KING. O child, you have lived the first period of your life, now it is time for you to enter into the second.

FEM. ASC. Boy, obey your father.

BOY. Very well, then

Send me th' peacock when grow plumes, that did rest  
On lap, felt delight when I stroked its crest.

FEM. ASC. *Smiling.* I shall do so. May good betide you! *Exit.*

KING. Lovely girl, I deem myself the foremost of those who have sons by getting your good son as Indra deemed himself by getting Shachi's son Jayanta. *Urvashi weeps on recollecting.*

JESTER. Why are your eyes filled with tears all of a sudden, madam?

KING. *Excitedly.* Why cry when I'm happy with this hope of my race?

Second wreath of pearls with tears on  
big breasts why place?

URV. King, listen then. At first at the sight of my son I had forgot all about it, but the mention of Indra's name reminds me of the condition and that oppresses my heart.

KING. Tell me of the condition.

URV. When my heart became attached to you, O great king! I was told by great Indra—

KING. What were you told?

URV. "When my dear friend, the royal sage, will see the face of the son born of your womb then you will have to come back to me". So, from fear of separation from your Majesty as soon as my son was born I secretly placed him in the hands of revered Satyabati in the hermitage of sage Chyavana for the purpose of educating him properly. Today my long-lived boy is restored to me as he is capable of serving his father. So ends my stay with your Majesty. *All feel grieved.*

KING. *Sighing.* Ah! How fate is hostile to our happiness!

No sooner am I blest with son than you retreat,  
Like lightning striking tree robbed by rain of its heat.

JESTER. Alas, good fortune is turned into a chain of mis-

fortunes! Now I fancy your Majesty will put on bark garment and retire to a penance grove.

URV. Unfortunate that I am ! I wonder if your Majesty will think that I am going to heaven as my business is over, for I have got back my son and his education is finished.

KING. No, not so.

O! Servility is vile, as it makes

Separation easy, free=~~will~~ it takes

Away, Indra obey, to heaven you repair,

Leaving State to son in woods I'll roam, fair !

Freely roam with herds of deer, here and there.

AYUS. It is not right, father, to place the burden that a big bull bears on the shoulders of a young one.

KING. Dear boy,

Tuskers in rut, though young, big ones can beat,

E'en small snakes have deadly poisonous fangs,

So you to rule over whole earth are fit,

It's on rank not age'ability hangs.

Latavya, tell the Council of Ministers in my name to prepare for the coronation of Ayus.

CHAMB. As your Majesty says. *Exit sorrowfully. All are blinded by a flash of light.*

KING. *Looking toward sky.* Why is there lighting in cloudless sky?

URV. *Looking.* Oh ! It is worshipful Narada !

KING. O! It is venerable Narada bright yellow like a streak of cow's gallstone on a touchstone

With his sacred thread like digit of moon, tawny matted hair,  
Like moving *kalpa* tree with gold branches, wreaths of  
pearls, does appear.

Like moving *kalpa* tree with gold branches, wreaths of  
pearls, does appear.

Let materials of worship be brought for him.

URV. *Taking them.* Here are the materials for the worship of the venerable person.

*Enter NARADA.*

NARADA. Long live the ruler of the middle world !

KING. *Taking the materials of worship from Urvashi and offering them.* Venerable sir, I bow to you.

URV. Venerable sir, I salute you.

NARADA. May the couple never be parted !

KING. Would that were fulfilled. *Aloud.* Embracing son.  
Bow to the venerable sir.

BOY. Venerable sir, Ayus, the son of Urvashi, bows to you.

NARADA. May you be long-lived !

KING. May this seat be favoured by you. *Narada sits on, it, then all sit down.*

NARADA. Hear, O king, the message of Indra.

KING. I am all attention.

NARADA. Indra, who knows everything by supernatural power, finding that you are resolved on retiring to some forest, desires you to know—

KING. What is his command ?

NARADA. Sages who can pry into the future,  
See impending 'tween gods, demons, a war,  
You are warlike, you are Indra's supporter,  
Use your weapons, live with Urvashi as partner.

URV. *Aside.* What a relief ! A dart is, as it were, taken off my heart !

KING. I am ready to obey the lord of the gods.

NARADA. Good.

Indra should serve you, you should do what he wills,  
Kindles sun the fire, fire in sun heat instils.

*Gazing at sky.* O Rambha ! Bring here the materials collected by Indra himself for the installation of Ayus as Crown prince.

*Enter NYMPHS with materials as stated.*

NYMPHS. Revered sir, here are the materials for installation.

NARADA. Let the long-lived one be seated on an auspicious seat.

RAMBHA. This way, child. *Making the prince sit down.*

NARADA. *Pouring contents of pot on prince's head.* Rambha, finish the rest of the ceremony.

RAMBHA. *Completing it.* Bow to venerable sir and to your parents. *Boy does so in order of rank.*

NARADA. May good betide you !

KING. May you be an ornament of our family !

URV. Be devoted to your father !

*Behind the scenes. Two bards.* Long live the prince !

FIRST. As Attri was like Creator, moon to Attri

was true ,

Budha like moon, king like Budha, so be like

father you,

for in your family, the brightest of all families, all blessings have attained their highest pitch.

SECOND. As Ganges is divided 'tween the Himalaya  
and the ocean,

Royal fortune so 'tween king and you of  
pluck unshaken.

NYMPHS. *Approaching Urvashi.* We congratulate you on your continued stay with the king and on your son's anointment as Crown prince.

URV. This delight is shared by all. *Taking the prince by hand.* Boy, salute the eldest mother. *Prince goes.*

KING. Wait there. You will go to her presently.

NARADA. Installation of this prince reminds me of another,  
Of divine hosts Kartikeya was appointed when  
commander.



KING. Why won't he be fit when he is thus favoured by you, venerable sir.

NARADA. What further can Indra do which is agreeable to you ?

KING. If Indra is gracious to me what more can I wish ?  
Yet let this be ,

*Words of the Actor.* Wealth and learning quarrel ever,  
For world's good union may be there.

*Exeunt all*

END OF ACT V.

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## MALAVIKA AND AGNIMITRA.

History says that Pushpamitra, a general of king Brihadratha, the last king of the Mayurya dynasty, dethroned the king and installed his own son Agnimitra on the throne. He became the founder of the Mitra or Sunga dynasty. Vidisha, modern Bhilsa, was his capital. Vidarbha was at that time torn by internal dissensions. Then the story goes that a prince of Vidarbha, Madhavasena, desiring to establish an alliance with Agnimitra was coming to Vidisha with his sister Malavika. On the way, Yagnasena, king of Vidarbha, fell upon his foe Madhavasena, captured and imprisoned him. His minister Sumati with his sister Kaushiki and Madhavasena's sister, princess Malavika, fled but fell into the hands of robbers. Madhavasena was killed. No trace could be found of Kaushiki or of Malavika. The drama is based on this mixture of fact and fiction probably current at the time of Kalidasa in the shape of a popular tale. It gives us an insight into the nature of intrigues that went on inside the harems of kings of old in India. The book has received warm eulogy from M. Henry in his *Les Litteratures de l'Inde* (pp 305 ff.).

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

### MALES.

AGNIMITRA	...	...	King of Vidēha, the hero.
GANADASA	...	...	Dancing master.
GAUTAMA	...	...	The Jester.
HARDATTA	...	...	Dancing master.
JAYASENA	...	...	Janitor.
MAUDGALYA	...	...	The Chamberlain.
Stage Manager, auxiliary actor, attendants, etc.			

### FEMALES.

DHARINI	...	...	The Queen.
IRAVATI	...	...	Junior wife of Agnimitra.
KAUSHIKI	...	...	Sister of Sumati
MALAVIKA	...	Sister of Madhavasena, prince of Vidarbha.	
MADHUKARIKA	...	...	Garden-keeper.
MADHAVIKA	...	In charge of underground cellar.	
JYOTSNIKA	...	...	Girls from Vidarbha
MADANIKA	...	...	
BAKULABALIKA	}	...	Maid-servants of Queen Dharini
KAUMUDIKA			
NAGARIKA			
SARASIKA			
CHANDRIKA	}	...	Maid-servants of Irayati.
NIPUNIKA			
SAMAHITIKA	...	...	Maid-servant of Kaushiki.
Maid-servants, eunuchs, etc.			

### PERSONS MENTIONED.

BAHATAKA	...	...	Minister of Agnimitra
DHRUBASIDDHA	...	...	Physician.
MADHAVASENA	...	Prince of Vidarbha, brother of Malavika.	
SUMATI	...	...	Minister of Madhavasena.
PUSHPAMITRA	...	Father of Agnimitra and the General of his army.	
VASUMITRA	...	...	Son of Agnimitra.
VEERASENA	Brother of Dharini and a General of the army.		
YAGNASENA	King of Vidarbha, brother of Madhavasena.		
VASULAKSHMI	Daughter of Agnimitra and Queen Dharini.		

# MALAVIKA AND AGNIMITRA.

## ACT I.

King Agnimitra sees beside the portrait of his queen that of an attendant of hers, a charming young girl, and falls in love with her. This girl was being brought by Madhavasena, a prince of Vidarbha to Agnimitra to be given away in marriage with him. Madhavasena was arrested by Yagnasena on the way and imprisoned. In the tumult the girl was lost. Agnimitra orders his troops to march to Vidarbha to secure Madhavasena's release. The king meanwhile becomes extremely anxious to meet the girl Malavika. The Jester hits upon a device and stirs up a quarrel between two music teachers. To settle it, much to the chagrin of the queen, it is decided that Malavika should display her skill before, among others, the king.

He who fulfils all devotees' desires,  
Sole lord of world, from pleasure all retires,  
He who in his eight forms world does uphold,  
Joined with Parvati in body yet self-controlled,  
In tiger-skin clad, as the hermits live,  
May that God, gloom dispelling, light you give.

MANAGER. Needn't worry any more. • *Looking towards greenroom.* Friend, come here.

*Enter an auxiliary* ACTOR.

ACTOR. Good sir, here I am,

MANAGER. It is spring festival, the assembled guests desire to see Kalidasa's Malavika and Agnimitra performed on the stage. Better begin with a song.

ACTOR. That can't be. Leaving veteran dramatists like Dhavaka, Saumilla, Kaviputra and others aside, why is preference to be shown to a modern poet like Kalidasa?

MANAGER. You are talking like one void of understanding, for,

Dramas are good or bad not because they are old or  
are new,

By their merits th' wise judge them though th' foolish  
borrow others' view.

ACTOR. The revered gentlemen will be the best judges  
of merit.

MANAGER. To bow to wishes of audience I am keen,  
As servants to obey those of Dharini the queen

HERE ENDS THE PROLOGUE.

*Enter BAKULABALIKA, a maidservant.*

BAK. I am going to the dancing master Ganadasa under the instructions of the queen to inquire how Malavika is getting on with her music and dancing lessons, so I am off to the music hall. *Advances.*

*Enter a second MAIDSERVANT with an ornament in hand.*

BAK. *Seeing the second maidservant.* Hallo Kaumudika, why have you become so quiet all of a sudden? You brushed past me without taking any notice of me.

SEC. MAID, Oh! It is Bakulabalika! Friend, my attention was fixed on this shining ring engraved with the impression of a snake just got from the jeweller, so you got the opportunity to chaff me. Do you know it is efficacious in case of snake-bite.

BAK. No wonder you were gazing at it so intently. Its rays look like filaments and they lend your fingers the appearance of a fresh flower.

SEC. MAID. Where are you off to?

BAK. To revered Ganadasa, as ordered by the queen, in order to inquire of Malavika's progress in dancing and music.

SEC. MAID. Friend, Malavika lives far away. How did the king chance to see her?

BAK. In a painting beside the queen.

SEC. MAID. How?

BAK. Listen. When the queen went to the music-hall to have a look at her own newly painted portrait the king happened to be there too.

SEC. MAID. What next, what next?

BAK. They shared the same seat, the king wished to know among the queen's attendants in the painting who was a particular young girl near her.

SEC. MAID. What exactly did he ask?

BAK. Fine girl that painted close to the queen! Who is she?

SEC. MAID. A good figure is everywhere admired.

BAK. The king's curiosity was further roused by the queen's delay in giving a reply. It made him all the more eager to know the girl's name. Then princess Vasulakshmi said that she was Malavika.

SEC. MAID. Just like a little girl, then.

BAK. What then? Malavika is carefully guarded from the king's view.

SEC. MAID. Now go, carry out the queen's orders, let me also take this ring to her. *Second maid departs.*

BAK. *Advancing and looking.* There comes the music teacher out of the music-hall. Let me get hold of him. *Goes up to him.*

*Enter GANADASA.*

GAN. All esteem their hereditary crafts. That I should feel respect for dramatic performances is no wonder. Sages say,  
Like sacrifices dramas gods esteem,  
Shiva's body dancing into two divides.

All the three qualities grace it, I deem,  
In many forms joy for all tastes provides.

BAK. *Approaching.* My respects to you, sir.

GAN. My good lad, may you be immortal !

BAK. Revered sir, the queen would like to know if Malavika finds your lessons tiresome.

GAN. My good lady, please tell the queen she is highly ingenious and intelligent. Indeed she picks up my lessons so quickly, improves upon them, embellishes them, so admirably, that her dance is truly an edification to me.

BAK. *Aside.* I find she surpasses Iravati. *Aloud.* Blest is the pupil when her teacher is so highly pleased with her performances.

GAN. Ask the queen not to worry about Malavika's progress. Where did she come across her ?

BAK. The queen has a brother Veerasena. His mother belonged to a lower caste. He has been placed in charge of the fort Anantapala on the bank of the Narmada. He made a gift of this girl to her sister, the queen, as he found the girl to be quite clever in all crafts.

GAN. *Aside.* From her appearance it seems she is endowed with all good qualities. *Aloud.* Good girl, she will make me famous, for,

Water from clouds falls on oysters, turns them to pearls,  
Teaching much improves a teacher when gets good girls.

BAK. Revered sir, quite true, but where is your pupil now ?

GAN. After a new lesson I have just ordered her a little rest, probably you will find her sitting near the window, having a whiff of fresh air.

BAK. Then with your leave I shall go to her and cheer her up with the compliments paid by you.







GAN. Go by all means and see your friend. My task is over, I am off to my own house. *Exeunt both.*

*Enter KING, MINISTER seated behind him with a letter in hand, ATTENDANTS standing in corner.*

KING. *Looking at the minister reading a letter.* What does Yagnasena, king of Vidarbha, intend to do ?

MINIS. Sire, suicide.

KING. I would like to hear the words of his message.

MINIS. In reply the king of Vidarbha complains thus, your Majesty has ordered the release of my cousin Madhavasena who was going to you to complete a marriage alliance when when he was seized and oppressed by my frontier guards. He should be set free with his wife and sister. I may state that your Majesty is surely familiar with the rules of conduct that should prevail among rulers of equal status in such matters and so should remain neutral. I undertake to trace the whereabouts of Madhavasena's sister lost in the tumult at the time of his arrest. Should, however, your revered Majesty insist upon Madhavasena's release, I too insist on one condition, namely, my minister's son, who is my brother-in-law and who has been kept confined in a fortress under your Majesty's order, should also be released, then only I should I set Madhavasena free.

KING. *Wrathfully.* What ? The foolish king wants to enter into a mutual agreement with me about exchange of prisoners ! Bahataka, the king of Vidarbha is an old enemy of mine and has been ever refractory. Let a detachment of my army with Veerasena at the head march to Vidarbha, overrun the territory without delay and thus carry out our previous resolution.

MINIS. As your Majesty pleases.

KING. Well, what do you think ?

MINIS. You have spoken according to the *shastras*.

Love of his men new king, who has just throne mounted,  
Hasn't won, can uprooted be like tree just planted.

KING. So I find the words of the authors of the *shastras* to be true. Let the army too get ready for this reason.

MINIS. As your Majesty orders. *Exit Minister.*

*Enter the JESTER, KING, as before, surrounded by attendants.*

JESTER. The revered king has asked me to devise some means which would enable him to see Malavika in person. He has only seen her portrait so far. I have acted under his instructions. I shall go to disclose my plan to the king.  
*Walks slowly.*

KING. *Seeing the Jester.* Ah ! Here is a minister to help me in the other task.

JESTER. *Approaching the king.* May you prosper

KING. *Shaking his head.* Sit down here. *Jester sits down.*  
Did you employ the eye of your understanding in finding out some means ?

JESTER. You are talking of means when you should have asked of the completion of the task.

KING. How pray ?

JESTER. *Whispers.* Thus, do you follow ?

KING. Good friend, smart beginning, though difficult I believe it is not impossible, for,

With help e'en a thing difficult can be done right,

One with eyes can't see in the dark without a light.

*Behind the scenes.* Needn't brag about yourself, let the palm of superiority be decided by the king.

KING. *Hearing.* Friend, buds have appeared on the tree of your advice.

JESTER. Soon you will see the fruit.

*Enter* CHAMBERLAIN.

CHAM. Sire, the minister begs to inform you that your Majesty's instructions have been carried out. Haradatta and Ganadasa are here. They are both dancing masters and highly jealous of each other. Both wish to see your Majesty.

KING. Let them come in.

CHAM. As your Majesty pleases.

*Exit* CHAMBERLAIN and *re-enter* with BOTH.

CHAM. Come this way, please.

GAN. *Seeing the king.* It is hard to approach the majesty of the king.

Not unpleasant to look at, not stranger,

Yet somehow I tremble as I come near,

Many a time have I met him o'er here

And each time like the sea he new does appear.

HAR. He shines like some effulgent lustre in human form.  
For,

Though have come with chamberlain, have no cause of fear,  
Yet his glory eyes deflect and makes me mute here.

CHAM. There is his Majesty. Go near him.

BOTH. *Approaching.* Long live your Majesty.

KING. Are you well? *Turning to attendants.* Offer them seats. *Both sit down on seats brought by attendants.* What is the matter? You should be giving lessons now. What brings you here?

GAN. Sire, listen please,

Acting, dancing, have I learnt from best of teachers, them  
has seen

The king, have taught them to many, and have been  
engaged by Queen.

KING. What of that? What next?

GAN. I have been abused by this fellow Haradatta in the

presence of some eminent men in these words, "This Ganadaśa is not like the dust of my feet".

HAR. Your Majesty, Ganadasa abused me first. He said "The difference between you and me is like that between the sea and a pool." So your Majesty be pleased to test our knowledge and skill. You act as the expert and the umpire in this dispute between us.

JESTER. That is quite proper.

GAN. Good resolve. Be pleased to listen with attention, your Majesty.

KING. Wait a bit. If I am to be the sole judge the queen might accuse me of partiality, so I shall settle this dispute in the presence of the queen and her companion Kaushiki.

JESTER. You have spoken rightly, sir.

BOTH. As your Majesty pleases.

KING. Maudgalya, inform the queen and invite her to come here with Kaushiki.

CHAM. As your Majesty commands.

*Exit CHAMBERLAIN and re-enter with Queen and KAUSHIKI.*

CHAM. Madam, this way please.

QUEEN. *Looking at Kaushiki,* What do you think of this dispute between Haradatta and Ganadasa?

KAU. You need not anticipate the defeat of your own party. Ganadasa is not a whit inferior to his rival.

QUEEN. But Haradatta has been appointed by the king, that will turn the scale in his favour.

KAU. Oh, don't forget that you are the queen.

It's th' sun that gives fire its lustre,

Night gives moonbeam its bright splendour.

JESTER. Lo! There comes the queen with her companion Kaushiki.

KING. Spiritual knowledge and Vedic in human  
form appear,  
As queen decked with ornaments' with friend in  
hermit's dress comes here.

KAU. *Approaching.* Long live the king !

KING. Worshipful lady, I salute you.

KAU. Earth is rich in minerals, queen has son powerful,  
Both are tolerant, as their lord hundred years rule.

QUEEN. Hail, hail to your Majesty.

KING. Trust I see you well. *Turning to Kaushiki.* Madam, please be seated. *All sit down.* To Kaushiki. These two teachers Haradatta and Ganadasa have fallen out. You will have to act as the umpire.

KALI. *Smiling.* Why this joke? Who would think of coming to a village to have a jewel tested leaving a town behind?

KING. No, not that. You see, both I and the queen might be partial, so I ask you. You are so wise too.

BOTH TEACHERS. The king is right. Madam, you mediate between us and determine our good and bad points.

KING. Then let the trial begin.

KALI. Your Majesty, dramatic art is essentially an art of representation, so what is the good of wrangling? What has the queen got to say?

QUEEN. If I am asked I must say I don't like this dispute.

GAN. Madam, don't fancy I am likely to be beaten even if our merits be equal.

JESTER. Madam, we shall see two rams fight today. Why uselessly pay them their salaries?

QUEEN. Surely, you are very quarrelsome.

JESTER. Not so, angry madam. Wild elephants ever fight to a finish.

KING. The queen has certainly seen the graceful movements of their bodies.

KAU. Certainly.

KING. Then what will they demonstrate now?

KAU. What I mean to say is this.

All teachers aren't alike, for some dance well,

While some not so apt, in teaching excel,

Both qualities in teachers good are merged,

Their merits are from learner's success judged.

JESTER. You have heard what the worshipful lady says. She means to say that the proficiency of a pupil alone can decide the issue.

HAR. I heartily agree.

GAN. Madam, I too agree.

QUEEN. Is the teacher to blame if the pupil be dull and do not profit by the instruction?

KING. Madam? Yes, he is.

Choice of pupil, rotten, inept,

Shows that teacher's void of intellect.

QUEEN. *Aside.* What can I do now? *Turning to Ganadasa.* *Aloud.* Let us not proceed any further, that will only excite the curiosity of the king. So a truce to your quarrel.

JESTER. The queen is perfectly right. O Ganadasa! You get plenty of sweetmeats every day as presents from the goddess of learning. Don't risk them by pursuing this quarrel.

GAN. What an interpretation of the queen's words! Listen to my apt reply. A learned man, anxious for money, afraid of losing his job, sticking to it any cost, even swallowing insults, turns his profession into a trade.

QUEEN. Your pupil has not been long under training, she n't have profited much yet by your instructions, so it

would hardly be fair to call upon her to give a public display of her skill.

GAN. But that is exactly what makes me so eager.

QUEEN. Then both of you display your skill before revered madam alone.

KAU. Queen, that is hardly fair. One alone can't judge even if omniscient.

QUEEN. *Aside.* Silly woman, I am wide awake, don't think I am sleeping. *Looking disgusted turns her face aside.* King points out to Kausika the expression on queen's face.

KAU. O girl with moon-like face ! Why turn it away now from the king ?

Needlessly wives with their husbands do  
not quarrel, my darling.

JESTER. There is good ground surely. One should support one's own side. *Looking towards Ganadasa.* You are are lucky indeed. The queen's wrath has saved you. However great a teacher might be, his merit cannot be judged by merely looking at the lessons he gives. ,

GAN. Madam, see how they view the matter, so  
Let dispute be settled then by a show,  
If you don't agree, you as foe will know.

*Prepares to leave his seat.*

QUEEN. *Aside.* I am helpless now. *Aloud.* A teacher has authority over his pupil.

GAN. You were so long viewing me with apprehension which was groundless. *Turning to king.* The queen has consented. Your Majesty be pleased to pass your order now. By what sort of dramatic representation shall I show the nature of my instructions ?

KING. As the worshipful lady will order.

KAU. I am afraid to do so, as I don't know what is passing in the queen's mind.



QUEEN. You are to mention it. His Majesty has ample authority over his own people.

KING. And you over me, you may say.

QUEEN. You mention it, madam.

KAU. A *chhalika* drama of Sharmishtha is difficult to perform but that will best bring out the difference between the two teachers and enable us to judge the merits of their teaching.

BOTH TEACHERS. As you command, madam.

JESTER. Then go to the greenroom, compose the music, when you are ready send a messenger to the king or sound a drum.

HAR. Let it be so. *Rises. Ganadusa looks at queen.*

QUEEN. *Looking at Ganadusa.* Come out successful.  
*Exeunt teachers.*

KAU. This way for a moment.

BOTH TEACHERS. *Returning.* Here we are back again.

KAU. I have been appointed as the judge, so I say in order to reveal the suppleness of all their limbs let not your pupils appear on the stage with a lot of flashy clothes or trashy ornaments on. *Exeunt both.*

BOTH TEACHERS. You need hardly have mentioned it.

QUEEN. *Turning to king.* If you were as skilful in your other duties as a king it would have been splendid.

KING. O wise lady! Don't you think otherwise of me. I had no hand in the matter. Men of equal merit to obtain the palm of superiority often fall out. *Sound of drum is heard behind the scenes. All listen.*

KAU. Ah! The music has started. It is very dear to peacocks and the deep and gentle notes of the overture distract the mind. Mistaking them to be thunder's rumble peacocks are stretching their necks and screaming and are thus adding to the music.

KING. Let us listen also.

QUEEN. *To herself.* How uncivil is the king ! *All rise.*

JESTER. *In whispers.* Friend, proceed slowly, otherwise suspicion will be roused in queen Dharini's mind.

KING. It's music of drum that excites,  
Me to fruition of hope guides.

*Exeunt all.*

END OF ACT I.

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ACT II.

Ganadasa appears first with Malavika to give a display of his tuition. All are enraptured at the music and dance of Malavika. Ganadasa is in high spirits. King feels very happy at having a glimpse of Malavika but the show simply inflames his passion, so he urges his friend, the Jester, to arrange a private meeting between him and fair Malavika.

*Enter KING seated, JESTER, QUEEN, KAUSHIKI, other men.*

*Songs begin.*

KING. Worshipful lady, of the teachers who is to begin first ?

KAU. They may be equal in merit, but in age Ganadasa is senior, so let him begin.

KING. Chamberlain, go, tell this to the teachers, then attend to your duty.

CHAM. As your Majesty orders. *Exit Chamberlain.*

*Enter GANADASA.*

GAN. Your Majesty, there is going to be a play by Sharmishtha with *chhalita* dance and music. Pray listen.

KING. We shall hear intently. *In whispers.* Friend,  
 How I wish Malavika could be seen.  
 • Feel tempted to remove the screen.

JESTER. *In whispers.* Lo ! There she comes, the honey of  
 your eye. Have a good look at her.

*Enter GANADASA looking at charming Malavika.*

JESTER. *Aside.* King, she is in no way inferior to her  
 likeness.

KING *In whispers.* Friend,  
 Her grace and charm picture feared did flatter,  
 On stage find her than her picture better.

GAN. *To Malavika.* My child, don't be nervous.

KING. *Aside.*

Her hands hang gracefully, short seems her chest  
 As her round plump breasts stand out firm, erect,  
 Her eyes are long, body curved, elegant,  
 Waist by hand can be clasped, hips protuberant,  
 On her face autumn moon's gleam and glow shine,  
 Her beauty's truly faultless and divine,  
 Her toes to dancing are well adapted,  
 Her whole frame seems to dancing to be fitted.

MAL. *Sings chhalika song after humming.*

Heart ! It's hard to win your love, you but hope in vain,  
 Desist, my left eye's corner quivers now again,  
 Can I approach one who's here, whom heart longs to see,  
 To whom it is attached, but ah ! I am not free.

*Gesticulates according to the prevailing sentiment in each  
 line of song.*

JESTER. *In whispers.* O friend, through the song Malavika  
 places her very soul in your hands.

KING. Friend, my heart too is equally touched, for,  
 "I'm attached to you", she said, seemed addressed those  
 words to me,  
 Queen's here, so my response to her appeal Malavika  
 couldn't see.

*Malavika prepares to depart after singing the song.*

JESTER. Madam, wait a little. I see you have made a  
 slip. *Malavika waits.*

GAN. Child, wait a little, show that you have been  
 properly instructed, then go.

KING. *Aside.* Ever looks graceful natural beauty.  
 Left hand with wristlet rests still on her rear,  
 Right hand outstretcht like a bunch of a creeper,  
 Her eyes fixed on toes moving midst fresh flowers,  
 Her body how straight and upright appears,  
 Her gaze on ground's fixed, doesn't move left or right,  
 Each pose of hers is such a pleasing sight.

QUEEN. Every word of the Jester I find, is acceptable to  
 the king.

GAN. Madam, don't say so. In the constant company of  
 the king even the Jester has become wise.

In company of learned one becomes quite wise,  
 If *ketaka* fruit be dropped turbid water's cleaned likewise.

*Turning to Jester.* Have you anything further to add?

JESTER. *Looking at Ganadasa.* Ask Kaushiki. I shall  
 mention my objections later.

GAN. Madam, let me have your opinion as to her merits  
 or demerits.

KAU. It is all so pretty.

She didn't speak, movements sense conveyed,  
 Steps kept time and feeling betrayed,

Her movements, gestures, were quite faultless,  
I deem her dancing good and blameless.

GAN. What does your Majesty think ?

KING. The performance has knocked my partiality out of me.

GAN. I rank myself as a first class dancing master today, for

Quality of gold is tested by fire,  
The wise praise me, what more can I desire ?

QUEEN. I am delighted Ganadasa has gone through the test with credit.

GAN. Madam, the credit is wholly due to your favour. *Looking towards Jester.* Now let me have your opinion.

JESTER You overlooked a *brahmana* who should be worshipped first at the time of the first exhibition of your skill.

KAU. What an observation in this connection ! *All smile including Malavika.*

KING. *To himself.* Blest are my eyes, they have seen the best of sights.

Pretty looked the long-eyed girl, her teeth did glisten,  
Her face looked like lotus with white filaments within.

GAN. O fallen *brahmana* ! This is not the first time you witness a performance, so no question of presenting your worship with an offering can arise.

JESTER. Then like a *chataka* I have begged in vain of this sky full of rumbling rainless clouds.

KAU. That is true.

JESTER. Let me follow the footsteps of wiser people. When revered Kaushiki has approved of the performance let me make a present of this thing. *Snatches a bracelet from the king's arm.*

QUEEN. Why do you give an ornament away before discovering her other merits ?

JESTER. Because the ornament does not belong to me.

QUEEN. Has your pupil finished, preceptor Ganadasa ?

GAN. Girl, come, let us be off. *Exeunt both.*

JESTER. *In whispers.* That much I can do for your satisfaction, friend.

KING. It is a great deal.

Gone the delight of my eyes, joy of my life, e'er,

Closed for ever the door of bliss with her departure.

JESTER. *In whispers.* Like a poor ailing person you wish medicine to be supplied free to you !

*Enter HARADATTA.*

HAR. Your Majesty, be pleased now to have a look at my dramatic performance.

KING. *To himself.* I have seen what I wanted to see. *Pretending to be impartial.* We are eager to see it.

HAR. I am much obliged.

*Behind the scenes, a singer.* Long live the king. It is midday.

'Neath lotus leaves swans have taken shelter,

Pigeons don't coo on roofs any longer,

See how peacocks run to fountains that play,

Like you sun in all his glory shines away.

JESTER. Lucky it is time for lunch. Doctors say if the king doesn't have his meals in time his health will be impaired. What do you say, Haradatta ?

HAR. After that what can one say ?

KING. *To Haradatta.* Then better wait till to-morrow for your performance.

HAR. As your Majesty pleases. *Exit Haradatta.*

QUEEN. Let your Majesty have your meal now.

JESTER. Madam, you too arrange to finish your meal without delay

KAU. *Rising.* Long live the king. *Exeunt queen and Kaushiki.*

JESTER. O friend, she is not only extremely handsome but matchless also in all fine arts.

KING Friend,

Like Cupid's poisoned arrow she is fair,

And skilful, trust she won't forget me e'er.

JESTER. You must think of me as well. My stomach is consumed by fire like a frying pan in a shop.

KING. Do you be quick to find out a remedy for me.

JESTER. I follow what you say. Like moonbeam by cloud Malavika is shut up by the queen. Like a vulture over a slaughter-house your mind is bent on this prey, yet you are timid. I would, however, like you to be less impatient and more attentive to the success of this undertaking.

KING. How can I have patience now ?

I don't care for any other girl, not e'en wife,

I love darling Malavika, she's my sole stay in life.

*Exeunt all*

END OF ACT II.

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### ACT III.

The king pines for Malavika. The spring with its breeze, bees, blossoms, he finds oppressive. She too feels in her heart a secret longing for the king but realises that it is hopeless to expect her love to be returned by the king. The king and Jester stroll in the pleasure garden, there they find Bakulabalika dye Malavika's feet, put bells on them, so that she might kick an ashoka tree to make it blossom. Iravati amorously inclined accompanied by a maid comes there to have a swing with the king when she discovers that Bakulabalika is skilfully pleading to Malavika for the king. The tree is kicked. The king and the Jester appear before the girl, the king asks her to embrace him when they are confronted by Iravati. She rates and whacks the king. The king apologises, she does not relent but runs away from the place.

*Enter SAMAHITKA, Kaushiki's maid-servant.*

SAM. I have been ordered by mistress to get a pomegranate to be given as a present to the queen, so I am looking for Madhukarika, the keeper of the pleasure-garden. *Advancing and looking.* There she is, looking at the ashoka tree.

*Enter MADHUKARIKA.*

SAM. *Approaching her.* Madhukarika, Is everything all right with your garden?

MADH. I see it is, Samahitika. How are you?

SAM. My mistress wishes to see the queen, so wants a pomegranate, she can't go to the queen empty-handed.

MADH. There's the tree in front of you. Of the two dancing masters whom did your mistress prefer?

SAM. Both are equally learned and skilful but credit is due to Malavika as an exceptionally clever pupil.

MADH. Did you hear the rumour current about Malavika?

SAM. Only this, that the king is very much attached to her but the queen being there he can't make any headway. Mala-



vika too is love-stricken and looks pale like a dry *malati* garland. Don't know much more. Now let me go.

MADH. Take that pomegranate hanging from a bough.

SAM. *Taking.* Friend, serving the good may you get a better fruit than this one. *Exit Samahitika.*

MADH. Wait, we shall go together. This golden *ashoka* tree is not blossoming, must report it to the queen for the touch of a pretty maiden.

SAM. You ought to, it is your duty. *Exeunt both.*

*Enter the lovelorn KING and the JESTER.*

KING. *Looking at himself.*

Why does heart grieve? There Malavika's present e'er.

Not for a moment parted is't from her,

Yet am reduced as I can't her embrace,

Eyes are full of tears as can't see her face.

JESTER. Be patient, sir. Don't be upset by grief. I have spoken to Malavika's friend Bakulabalika what you told me.

KING. What did she say?

JESTER. She asked me to inform your Majesty that she deemed it an honour to be entrusted with such a task but it was not easy of accomplishment. Malavika is more carefully guarded than ever by the queen, so it is difficult to get her like some treasure guarded by a serpent. Yet she would try.

KING. O Cupid! Why are you so cruel to me? You hit me mercilessly at every step of this hazardous game. I can't wait any longer.

What anguish do you cause with what soft arrow?

Something may be soft yet sharp, that you show.

JESTER. Be composed, friend, I have taken the matter in hand, I have told you.

KING. I don't feel myself up to any kind of work, but then how am I to spend the evening?

JESTER. Why? Iravati wants to celebrate the advent of spring today, so has through Nipunika sent some flowers to you and desires you to be present at the pleasure-garden as she would like very much to swing with you. You too have promised to go. So let us go to the pleasure-garden.

KING. I can't.

JESTER. Why?

KING. Friend, women are naturally cute. However much I might try to conceal my love for another girl she will find it out.

So I better refuse, deal to love a death-blow,

Than turn cold in the end but first great fondness show.

JESTER. Your affection for the ladies of the palace is so firm, that it can't suddenly become cold.

KING. *Reflecting.* Show me the way to the pleasure-garden.

JESTER. Come this way, sire. *Both go.*

JESTER. The garden invites you to come in by its quivering finger-like branches.

KING. *Displaying pleasurable feeling.* Certainly the spring has fully set in,

Look, through cuckoo's voice spring's asking,

'How do you love's anguish great bear'?

Softly is me touching the spring

Through breeze bearing smell of flower.

JESTER. Then step in to gain inward tranquility. *Both go in.* How lovely the spring looks arrayed in a charming garb of flowers! It is out to steal your mind, it puts to shame even the dress of young girls.

KING. Yes, I behold it with wonder,

*Ashoka* blossoms scolds red lips of young maids,

Black, white and red *kurabakas* chide their cheeks' paints,

The bees on *tila* blooms *tilaka* marks on foreheads,  
Spring is putting to shame girls' adornments.

*Gazes at the beauty of the garden.*

*Enter MALAVIKA looking extremely distressed.*

MAL: I fell in love with the king without knowing his heart, am now dying in shame. I can't unburden my soul even to my companions. Don't know how long yet will Cupid torment me. *Advancing a few steps.* Where am I going now? *Reflecting.* I remember, the queen fell off the swing as the Jester fidgeted about there and sprained her foot. She can't move, so has asked me instead to touch the *ashoka* tree. If it flowers within five days then, *sighing*, she would see that my desires are fulfilled. So I had better go there. But wait, let Bakulabalika come with anklet-bells, in the meantime let me eat my heart away.

JESTER. *Seeing.* There she is like a cooling draught before a drunkard.

KING. Friend, who's that?

JESTER. She is Malavika in none too clean clothes, looking distressed and alone.

KING. *Joyfully.* What? Malavika?

JESTER. Who else?

KING. I feel I'm going to live, as near's water

The travellers know when crane's voice they hear.

Where is she?

JESTER. She comes out of the bower and seems to make for us.

KING. *Joyfully.* Friend, yes, I see her.

Hip broad, waist thin, breasts raised, eyes long, I see,  
She is, dear friend, a second life to me.

Friend, she looks prettier than before,

Pale her cheeks a few ornaments she has got on,  
So looks like a spring-creeper flowers which adorn.

JESTER. She is oppressed by love like you.

KING. It is love for me which prompts you to say so.

MAL. Here is the pretty *ashoka* tree awaiting a touch.  
It has not blossomed yet. I feel uneasy, so does this tree.  
Let me console myself by taking my seat under its shade on  
the stone slab.

JESTER. Do you hear sir? She is uneasy, she says, must  
be for you.

KING. I don't agree with your conjecture, for,  
South wind bearing smell of blooms, vapour, e'er  
Of itself makes one uneasy, I fear. *Malavika sits down.*

KING. Friend, let us hide ourselves behind the creepers.

JESTER. I believe I see Iravati not far away.

KING. When one sees lotus one is not afraid of crocodiles.  
*Stands looking at her.*

MAL. Heart desist, keep yourself within bounds, there is  
none to help you, why torment me in vain?

KING. Darling, cruel ever is love, you see.

*Jester looks at the king.*

Don't cause of your trouble mention to me,  
Find you in distress, but why I wonder,  
Am I the cause, dear? You make me ponder.

JESTER. Soon your doubt will be removed, for I see  
Bakuabalika stepping in quietly, I sent her to find out the cause  
of Malavika's trouble and asked her to draw Malavika to-  
wards you.

KING. But does she remember all that?

JESTER. Can she ever forget such a serious matter? I  
haven't.

*Enter BAKULABALIKA with ornaments of feet.*

BAK. Friend, are you well.

MAL. Hallo Bakulabalika ! Welcome to you. Sit down.

BAK. *Seated.* The queen thinks you are the fittest person to kick the *ashoka* tree. Let me have your feet so that I may paint them with red lac dye and put ornaments on them.

MAL. *Aside.* What's the good of rejoicing ? How am I to free myself from the present danger ? Or rather, these ornaments will adorn my corpse.

BAK. What are you musing about ? The queen is anxious that this *ashoka* tree should blossom.

KING. What ? These are all for making the tree blossom !

JESTER. Don't you know that the queen has not lent these ornaments for nothing.

MAL. Pardon, my friend. *Puts forward her leg.*

BAK. We are one in body, friend. *Adorns the foot.*

KING. Look at the red lac dye on my darling's foot. Seems Cupid burnt by Shiva's wrath has blossomed anew like a fresh twig.

JESTER. Her feet are worthy of the paint.

KING. You are right.

Her feet are fit to kick this tree without flower

And me, stooping 'fore her, poor but ardent lover.

JESTER. She might kick you both.

KING. May the words of a *brahmana*, who can see into the future, turn out to be true.

*Enter IRAVATI excited by passion and a servant NIPUNIKA.*

IRA. I have heard many say that wine is an exquisite ornament of a woman, is it true ?

NIP. It was a mere proverb so long, it has become true now.

IRA. Don't try to please me, now say if my husband is waiting for me. Where is the swing?

NIP. Madam, he must be here, as you love him so much.

IRA. Don't pay an empty compliment, speak the truth.

NIP. The Jester told me that the king would be here as the Jester would then get some sweetmeats on the occasion of the spring festival. Be quick, madam. Be quick.

IRA. *Advancing according to her condition.* Passion excites me, prompts me to hasten to my husband, heart moves fast but feet slow.

NIP. Here we are near the swing at last.

IRA. Nipunika, I don't find the king here.

NIP. Madam, look for him. He must be here, perhaps he has kept himself in hiding somewhere by way of a joke. Let us sit down on the piece of stone near the *ashoka* tree.

IRA. Let us do so.

NIP. *Looking around.* Searching for mango blossoms we are bit by ants.

IRA. How so?

NIP. Look. Under the shade of the *ashoka* tree Bakula-balika is putting some ornaments on Malavika's feet.

IRA. *Timidly.* It is not proper for Malavika to be here. What do you say?

NIP. Perhaps she has been sent by the queen she being confined to bed by the sprain, otherwise why should she send her bells for the servant to wear?

IRA. That is quite likely.

NIP. Why not look for the king?

IRA. Feet refuse to move, passion perturbs me, yet my doubts I must remove.

MAL. *Observing, aside.* It is not for nothing that I feel faint-hearted.

BAK. *Showing foot.* One foot has been dyed. How do you like it?

MAL. I blush to praise my own foot. You are quite an expert in this art.

BAK. I am the pupil of the king in this matter.

JESTER. Friend go and ask for your fee.

MAL. Strange, you are not proud of your skill.

BAK. Now I shall be proud as I have got a pair of feet which accord well with my proficiency in the art. *Looking at dye on foot, aside.* I hope to succeed in my mission. *Aloud.* One foot has been dyed, it has to be dried, wind will do it, need not be blown to it.

KING. Friend, listen. The dye on Malavika's foot has to be dried by puffs of air from the mouth. If anyone should do it, it is I. Here is a grand opportunity for me.

JESTER. Don't worry, you will have to do it all your life.

BAK. Your feet now look smart like red lotuses. May they ever grace your husband's lap. *Iravati looks towards Nipunika.*

KING. Her words are like a blessing conferred on me.

MAL. Why talk of something which is not likely to happen?

BAK. No, I have said what is quite likely.

MAL. Remember, I am your friend.

BAK. Not mine alone.

MAL. Of who else, then?

BAK. Of the king as well who appreciates good qualities.

MAL. Rubbish. I am not good enough for that.

BAK. Friend, true you aren't. But what does the king's faded complexion mean?

NIP. Poor Bakulabalika's replies seem to be calculated.

BAK. Love is welcomed by love, demonstrate the truth of this saying of wise men.

MAL. You are talking nonsense.

BAK. Not at all, they are the words of your lover spoken not by himself but through the Jester.

MAL. When I think of the queen I refuse to believe in the truth of such statements.

BAK. Sweet girl, for fear of bees will not fresh mango blossoms, the soul of spring, adorn the ear?

MAL. Then help me in this uphill task.

BAK. My name is Bakulabalika. The more I am squeezed the sweeter I smell.

KING. Bravo Bakulabalika! Bravo! How clever of you! No sooner you find her willing than by suitable words hold her firmly within the hollow of your hand. Truly success in love depends on the skill of emissaries!

IRA. Look, girl, Bakulabalika is having all this done by Malavika.

NIP. Madam, it is but the duty of a messenger.

IRA. My apprehensions were indeed just. Now must think of my next step.

BAK. The other foot is also dyed, now let me fix the bells.  
*Fixing them.* Get up and carry out the queen's orders.  
*Both rise.*

IRA. Do you hear? It is the queen who has ordered.

BAK. Kick that enjoyable and highly coloured thing standing before you.

MAL. *Joyfully.* What? My lord?

BAK. *Smiling.* No, not your lord, but the *ashoka* tree. Put a twig round each ear of yours.

JESTER. Did you hear?

KING. That is enough for a lover,

Yet I would not like her to be so cold,  
Better 'tis both should be ardent, warm, bold.



*Malavika puts twigs on her ears and gracefully kicks the ashoka tree.*

KING. Friend,

Malavika takes twigs from tree, gives a kick, fair barter,  
But alas ? Look, am deprived I of the pleasure.

MAL. Will this showing of respect by me be fruitful ?

BAK. You are not to blame. The tree will be deemed ungrateful if it fails to bear blossoms in time.

KING. O *ashoka* tree !

You've been honoured by kick from lean Malavika's tinkling  
lotus feet,  
If don't flower quick, though dear to lovers, vain will be  
kick sweet.

I would like to be there as soon as their conversation is over.

JESTER. Come, let us have some jokes with her.

*Enter BOTH.*

NIP. Madam, the king goes to the *ashoka* garden.

IRA. I thought before he would.

JESTER. *Approaching.* Madam, is it right to kick the tree, dear to my dear friend, with your left foot when my friend is here ?

BOTH. *Agitated.* Oh, it is the lord ! Hail to your Majesty !

JESTER. You know it all, Bakulabalika. Why didn't you stop her from doing this unseemly act ? *Malavika looks frightened.*

NIP. Madam, do you see what the Jester is driving at ?

IRA. If this odious *brahmana* were not to do it how could he get his grub ?

BAK. Sir, under the queen's command Malavika has done

this act, so pray don't be angry. *She and Malavika bow to the king.*

KING. If that be so you are not to blame. *Helps Malavika to get up.*

JESTER. We respect the wishes of the queen.

KING. *Smiling.* Does it not hurt you to plant, dear,  
Your soft foot on a tough tree mere?

*Malavika blushes.*

IRA. Ah, the king's heart is soft like butter!

MAL. Bakulabalika, we had better go to the queen and tell her that we have carried out her wishes.

BAK. Get the permission of the lord.

KING. Of course you would go, fair girl. But would you listen to a request of mine.

BAK. Listen. What is your request, my lord.

KING. I can't hold my patience any longer. Pray touch me who is devoted to you.

IRA. *Suddenly approaching.* Do fulfil his wish. The ashoka tree doesn't blossom, but the king will produce fruit. *All flurried at the appearance of Iravati.*

KING. *In whispers.* What to do now, friend?

JESTER. Turn tail.

IRA. Bravo Bakulabala! You have done a grand thing. Now see that the king's wishes are fulfilled.

BOTH. Excuse us, we are not fit to win the king's love.  
*Exeunt both.*

IRA. Men can't be trusted. As a deer is lured by a hunter, so have I been. I didn't know a word of it before.

JESTER. *In whispers.* O friend! Now think of a suitable reply. Say, you are a novice in the game like a thief caught near a river-bank.

KING. Dearest, I did not long for Malavika. I was whiling away the time pending your arrival.

IRA. *To Jester.* You faithless man ! I never dreamt that my lord has got such a treasure in his possession. If I had the faintest idea I would not have troubled to come here.

JESTER. The king loves his wives impartially. He was talking to the queen's maids, you need not be annoyed at that. Just think of your own self.

IRA. Let the king converse freely with Malavika. Why should I torment my heart ? *Turns round full of wrath.*

KING. *Following Iravati.* Madam, do relent. *Iravati walks with her feet entangled in the girdle.* O fair ! Such indifference to your lover is not proper.

IRA. Villain ! I can't trust you.

KING. Dear, You may call me a villain if you like, I don't mind, but O angry woman ! this favourite girdle of yours falls at your feet and begs forgiveness of you, don't be angry with it.

IRA. This arch dissembler is trying to imitate you, it obstructed my feet at first, then fell at my feet. *Tries to hit king with it.*

KING. Friend,

As rainclouds with lightning hit the Vindhya hill,  
So she hits me while her eyes tears do fill.

IRA. Why by obstructing me accuse me as guilty ?

KING. *Holding queen's hand with the girdle in it.* O lady with curly hair,

I have sinned, you were about to hit me,  
Why relent ? Me you forgive then, I see.

*Falls at Iravati's feet.*

IRA. Deceiver, they are not Malavika's feet, they won't please you. *Exit with maidservant.*

JESTER. Get up now. She did not relent after all.

KING. *Not finding Iravati.* Is my love really gone ?

JESTER. Iravati is guilty of unseemly behaviour. Let us run away before she like planet Mars veers round and comes here again.

KING. Strange are the ways of Cupid!

I have lost my heart to Malavika, my request, wife, see,  
has spurned,

Well, I count a favour this, as shall show how cold  
I have turned.

*Exeunt all.*

### END OF ACT III.

## ACT IV.

Iravati discloses to queen Dharini the liaison between the king and Malavika. The consequence is that Malavika with Bakulabalika is shut up in an underground cellar with instructions to the guard not to release them till the queen's ring is shown to her. The king goes to see the queen lying in bed with a sprained foot when in comes the Jester pretending to have been bit by a snake. He is taken to a specialist who asks for a ring with a stone which would remove the poison from the body. The queen had one such ring and she gave it at once. With it the Jester procures the release of the girls. The king meets his love, the Jester and Bakulabalika stand away from the couple. They are however seen by Iravati. She gets angry with the king and the Jester. The situation becomes tense but is relieved by the news that the princess was suffering from convulsions at the sight of a monkey. They all quickly clear out of the place,

*Enter the love-lorn KING and a JANITOR.*

KING. *Aside.* Seed of love Malavika's words did  
plant in heart,  
Red shoots did sprout when from  
her last did part,

But when I touched her the tree did flower,  
Of that tree of love when shall  
drink th' nectar?

*Aloud.* Friend Gautama!

JAN. Hail to the king! Gautama is not here.

KING. *To himself.* I know, I sent him to inquire of Malavika.

*Enter JESTER.*

KING. *To Janitor.* Jayasena, queen Dharini fell from the swing and sprained her foot. Tell me where she is lying.

JAN. As your Majesty pleases. *Exit Janitor.*

KING. Gautama, what news of your revered friend?

JESTER. Poor creature! She is like a bird seized by a cat.

KING. *Sadly.* What do you mean?

JESTER. She is kept confined in the strong-room underground by the tawny-eyed woman.

KING. Is that the consequence of our love affair?

JESTER. Certainly.

KING. Who provoked the queen against us?

JESTER. Listen then. Kaushiki told me that Iravati went to see the queen yesterday and inquire about the sprain.

KING. Then.

JESTER. The queen asked her whether she had met you in the pleasure-garden. She replied, "Don't be nice to the king for he is in love with another girl, you don't know it".

KING. Although nothing was expressly mentioned, plainly the reference was to Malavika, I fear.

JESTER. Then she mentioned everything to the queen when pressed by the latter.

KING. Iravati still continues to be angry. What happened then?

JESTER. What else? Like the daughters of the serpent king Malavika and Bakulabalika are kept in chains underground.

KING. Oh, how terrible!

Like sweet cuckoos or bees hovered they o'er flower,  
Now by strong wind in trees' hollow driven together.  
How are we to secure their freedom?

JESTER. What can be done? The queen has given special instructions to Madhavika, who is in charge of the cellar, not to let any of them come out unless the queen's ring, bearing her seal, is shown to Madhavika.

KING. *Sighing.* Friend, what is to be done now?

JESTER. *Reflecting.* One thing may be done.

KING. What is it?

JESTER. *Looking around.* We may be overheard. *Whispers to the king embracing him.* Thus, thus.

KING. *Joyfully.* What has to be done may be done quickly to achieve success.

*Enter JANITOR.*

JAN. Your Majesty, the queen is lying in an airy room. A maidservant is smearing red sandal paste on foot while she is talking to the worshipful lady.

KING. This is the opportune moment for us to be there.

JESTER. You proceed, sir, I shan't see the queen with empty hand.

KING. You must take Jayasena into confidence.

JESTER. Very good. *Whispers.* Thus it will be. *Exit Jester.*

KING. Take us to the queen's room, Jayasena.

JAN. This way, your Majesty.

*Enter QUEEN lying in bed, KAUSHIKI and some SERVANTS in attendance.*

QUEEN. Madam, nice story that. Then.

KAU. Looking around. The rest I shall tell later. The king is here.

QUEEN. O, my lord ! *Tries to get up.*

KING. Don't trouble to show respect to me.

Anklet bells are off your feet, they're tender.

Trouble not to get up while pain is there.

QUEEN. Hail to your Majesty !

KAU. Hail to your Majesty !

KING. *Saluting Kaushiki.* Madam, is the pain less acute now ?

QUEEN. Thanks, very much less.

*Enter JESTER, alarmed, with sacred thread coiled round his finger.*

JESTER. Save me, O king, save me, I have been bit by a snake ! *All look sad.*

KING. Woe, O woe ! Where have you been ?

JESTER. I had been to the pleasure-garden to get some flowers for the queen as is customary.

QUEEN. Fie on me ! I am the cause of the *brahmna's* death.

JESTER. No sooner did I stretch my right hand to pluck a bunch of *ashoka* flowers than a snake came out of a hole and bit it, here is the mark. *Shows it.*

KAU. An incision might save his life, the other remedies being blood-letting and cauterising the affected part. Steps have to be taken at once.

KING. Send for a specialist, Jayasena ! Get Dhrubasiddha here at once.

JAN. As your Majesty commands. *Exit.*







JESTER. My life, alas, will come to such an inglorious end !

KING. Don't be despondent, some snakes are poisonless.

JESTER. I have a peculiar sensation all over the body. Why shan't I be afraid ? *Gesticulates pain of poisoning.*

QUEEN. Hold him, see that he does not fall down. *Kaushiki holds him.*

JESTER. *Looking towards king.* You have been a friend of mine since childhood. Look after my childless mother after my death.

KING. Don't be afraid. The doctor will soon cure you. Be quiet.

*Enter JAYASENA, the janitor.*

JAN. Your Majesty, the doctor says, 'Get Gautama here'.

KING. Let eunuchs take him away.

JAN. As your Majesty commands.

JESTER. *Looking at the queen.* Worshipful madam, it is doubtful whether I shall survive, so please excuse me of any fault that I may have committed in serving my dear friend:

QUEEN. May you live long ! *Exit Janitor with Jester.*

KING. The poor fellow is timid. He has no faith in a doctor who is in name and in fact sure of success.

*Enter JAYASENA.*

JAN. Your Majesty, the doctor has asked me to look for a ring whose stone will take the poison off.

QUEEN. Here is my ring bearing the impression of a snake, take it, but return it to me after you have done with it. *Makes over ring, Jayasena takes it.*

KING. Jayasena, as soon the object is served inform us.

JAN. As your Majesty pleases. *Exit Jayasena.*

KAU. I fancy the Jester is all right by this time.

KING. Let us hope so.

*Enter JANITOR.*

JAN. Hail to your Majesty ! Gautama is almost free from the effect of poison, in a short time he will be all right.

QUEEN. By luck I have been saved from the tongue of scandal.

JAN. Minister Bahataka mentions in several state matters he desires to hold a consultation with your Majesty, so he would like to be favoured with a visit.

QUEEN. Your Majesty had better go.

KING. Madam, it is warm where you are. Your ailment requires you to rest in a cool place. So better shift the bed.

QUEEN. Girls, do as the king bids.

GIRLS. Very well, madam. *Do so. Exit queen, Kaushiki and attendants.*

KING. Jayasena, show us the secret passage to the pleasure-garden.

JAN. This way, sire.

KING. Jayasena, has Gautama succeeded in carrying out his plan ?

JAN. Certainly.

KING. Even if right means we do adopt

As to its success mind's in doubt.

*Enter JESTER.*

JESTER. Hail to your Majesty ! The end has been gained.

KING. Jayasena, mind your duty.

JAN. As your Majesty pleases. *Exit Janitor.*

KING. Gautama, Madhavika, the guard of the prison-house, is thick-skulled.

JESTER. How can she object when she sees the queen's ring ?

KING. I am not speaking about the ring. She ought to have asked, why they had been imprisoned, why they were

being released, why of all people you were engaged in the task when the queen had so many servants.

JESTER. She certainly put those questions to me, but however silly I might be I had a brain-wave and gave satisfactory replies.

KING. What did you say?

JESTER. I told her that astrologers said that the king was under the influence of a malign star now, to propitiate it all prisoners should be released.

KING. *Joyfully.* What next? What next?

JESTER. And I further said that Iravati would be angry if any of the queen's attendants were to ask for their release, so I have been sent as this would imply that the king is releasing the prisoners.

KING. *Embracing Jester.* Really you love me. It is not only the skill but often the love of a friend that accomplishes well-nigh impossible deeds.

JESTER. Be quick, sire. I have left Malavika in the *Samudra* (sea) palace.

KING. I shall greet her there. Go before me. *Exeunt both.*

JESTER. Come sir, here is the room.

KING. *Alarmed.* Friend, Iravati's attendant Chandrika is come to pluck flowers, let us hide ourselves behind the wall.

JESTER. Ha, thieves and lovers should shun moonbeam!  
*Both conceal themselves.*

KING. Let us find out through the window how Malavika is awaiting my arrival.

JESTER. As you please. *Both stand and look.*

*Enter MALAVIKA AND BAKULABALIKA.*

BAK. Friend, salute the king.

MAL. I salute you.

KING. She is being shown my picture in the room.

MAL. *Joyfully, looking at the door.* Don't tell a fib.

KING. Her joy and dejection please me.

Malavika looks so nice as sunshine and shade on her  
face now play,

Just like pretty lotus at sunrise and parting of the day.

BAK. Don't you see the king in the picture ?

BOTH. *Saluting.* Hail to your Majesty !

MAL. Friend, when I met the king I got so excited that I could hardly gratify my eyes by having a good look at him, now this picture too fails to please me.

JESTER. Do you hear that, sir ? Does she say the picture flatters you ? Are you then today vainly proud of your youth like a trunk that once contained valuable gems ?

KING. Friend, women are naturally shy, even when filled with curiosity, for,

Modest girls wish to have a good look at lovers,

But they cannot, so look only through eye's corners.

MAL. Friend, who is she in the picture towards whom turning his face round the king is casting loving glances ?

BAK. She is Iravati.

MAL. Friend, the king is partial then, leaving all other ladies aside he shows his love for her alone.

BAK. *Aside.* She is jealous, as the simple girl takes the lord in the picture to be her living lord. Let me make fun of her. *Aloud.* She is his favourite wife.

MAL. Then why torment my poor soul ? *Returns dejected.*

KING. Friend, behold,

Her brow is contracted, lips distended, views me

With displeasure, has learnt to act well, I can see.

JESTER. Try to soften her.

MAL. Revered Gautama is waiting on him in the picture too, I see. *Tries to go in another direction.*

BAK. *Stopping Malavika.* Don't go, you are angry now.

MAL. If you think so then try to dispel my wrath.

KING. *Approaching,*

Lotus eyed maid ! You are angry with me,  
Here I am before you, your servant, see.

BAK. Hail to your Majesty !

MAL. *To herself.* What ? Did I express any displeasure at the picture ? *Bashfully stands in front with folded hands, king looks lovelorn.*

JESTER. Why are you so cold ?

KING. Because your friend mistrusts me.

JESTER. Why would she mistrust you ?

KING. Listen,

Comes within my vision, then she disappears,  
Seems within my grasp but then off she clears,  
When my soul oppressed with love thus she flouts,  
As to union won't I then have my doubts.

BAK. Friend, you have often disappointed his Majesty, now confide in him.

MAL. Friend, I am so unhappy that I can't have union with him even in dream.

BAK. O King, now it is your turn to speak.

KING. What can I say ?

To her 'fore Cupid's fire myself I offer,  
Don't want your friend to serve me, shall serve her.

BAK. I am charmed with your answer.

JESTER. *Advancing hastily.* Bakulabalika, a fawn is chewing *ashoka* buds, let us go there.

BAK. Yes, let us.

KING. You should guard it at all times. Be quick.

JESTER. Doesn't Gautama know that ?

BAK. Revered Gautama, I shall keep myself concealed, you keep watch at the gate.

JESTER. That's right. *Exit Bakulabalika.* Let me sit behind the crystal pillar. *Does so.* How cool is the touch of some stones. *Goes to sleep, Malvavika stands timidly.*

KING. Banish fear, long have I tarried for yōur love, see,  
I am mango tree, a creeper you, twine round me.

MAL. Much as I would like to, I am afraid of the queen.

KING. Dear, have no fear.

MAL. *With a hit.* Your Majesty's` courage I saw once in Iravati's presence.

KING. Must show equal love to all my wives, dear,  
My life hangs, remember, on your favour.

*He tries to embrace her, she to avoid it.*

KING. The first approach to virgin is how sweet !  
How timorous her every movement meet !  
How her hand trembled while her knot of waist  
I did undo ! How covered she her breast  
While to embrace her tried ! How turned her face  
While I tried to kiss, O th' joys they embrace !

*Enter IRAVATI and NIPUNIKA.*

IRA. Nipunika, did you really hear from Chandrika that Gautama was lying alone on the terrace of the *Samudra* palace ?

NIP. How could I have told you a fib, madam ?

IRA. We shall go there then to ask if Gautama is now out of danger.

NIP. You like to add something more ?

IRA. Also to please the king painted in the picture there.

NIP. Why the painted king ? What's wrong with the living king ?

IRA. Silly girl, because a painted lord is like a living lord who is attached to another. I am just going to apologise for my rudeness.

NIP. This way, please, madam. *Exeunt both.*

*Enter NAGARIKA, a servant.*

NAG. Hail to mistress! Madam, the queen says it is not the time for her now to show her jealousy toward the king. Malavika and Bakulabaliika have been put in prison out of deference to your feelings. If you so like, she may speak to the king on your behalf.

IRA. Nagariika, tell the queen that we can't order her about. Malavika's imprisonment is a favour shown to me, but on account of whose kindness is this honour shown to me?  
*Exit servant.*

NAG. As mistress orders.

NIP. *Advancing.* Here is Gautama lying beside the wall like a bull in a market-place.

IRA. How terrible was the catastrophe! Part of the poison may still be left in the system.

NIP. He looks cheerful, has been treated by a specialist, so is not going to die.

JESTER. *Shouting in dream.* O Malavika!

NIP. Listen, mistress. Who can trust this wretched creature? He always fills his stomach with grub got from you but dreams of Malavika now.

JESTER. Do you surpass Iravati!

NIP. Such great villainy! Let me frighten this *brahmana* who is in mortal terror of snakes by this staff crooked like a snake.

IRA. The ungrateful wretch is fit to be bit by a snake. *Nipunika throws the staff at Jester.*

JESTER. *Waking suddenly.* Terrible! Friend, a snake fell on me!



KING. *Approaching suddenly.* Don't be alarmed.

MAL. *Following king.* He speaks of a snake, so don't go out suddenly.

IRA. Shame! My lord is also running towards the Jester.

JESTER. *Smiling.* What! It is only a wooden staff. I thought it was a snake, as I once dishonoured snakes by making a snake-bite mark with a spinet

*Enter BAKULABALIKA with a hurried toss of the curtain.*

BAK. Sir, don't go there, I see something tortuous, looks like a snake.

IRA. *Suddenly appearing before king.* Your midday rendezvous has been a success quite, I trust. *All are bewildered seeing Iravati.*

KING. Darling, unprecedented is indeed your courtesy.

IRA. Bakulabalika, you have kept your word in respect of your lord's rendezvous.

BAK. Madam, be composed. Ask the king what I have done. Does Indra refrain from showering rain because frogs croak?

JESTER. That is not it. The king overlooked your rudeness at your very sight but you are not composed yet.

IRA. What can I do even if I am angry?

KING. That is so. It is not proper for you to be needlessly angry. For,

Never seen you angry without cause, dear,

Rahu seizes moon, but on full moon night, fair.

IRA. My lord has justly observed "needlessly." When our fate has attached itself to another person, then our wrath is indeed "needless," for we would be only laughed at then.

KING. You misunderstand me. Really, I don't see you have got any reason to be angry, for it was a festival day and I ordered the release of the two prisoners and they came to pay their respects to me.

IRA. Tell the queen her partiality is patent to me. I have made up my mind.

NIP. As you please, madam. *Exit Nipunika.*

JESTER. *Aside.* Oh the calamity that has come to pass ! On a tame pigeon, free from captivity, a cat has pounced !

*Enter NIPUNIKA.*

NIP. Madam, I met Malavika by chance on the way. She said *Whispers.*

IRA. *Aside.* That is more likely. It is all the doing of this mean *brahmana*. *Aloud.* Such is the guidance of this fellow, the keeper of the king's love affairs, his manual of love.

JESTER. Madam, if I could read a word of this manual then I would not have sent the king here.

KING. *In whispers.* How to get out of this mess.

*Enter JAYASENA rushing.*

JAY. Your Majesty, Vasulakshmi was playing with a ball when a tawny monkey came there, she got so frightened that though she lies on her mother's lap, she is yet trembling like a bud quivering in the breeze.

KING. Woe, O woe ! Children are naturally timid.

IRA. *Excitedly.* My lord, console her. Be quick. See there is no change for the worse.

KING. I will bring back consciousness in her. *Hurries away.*

JESTER. Bravo, tawny monkey ! We are much indebted to you. You have saved your own party. *Exeunt King, Jester, Iravati, Nipunika, and Janitor.*

MAL. I tremble when I think of the queen. Don't know what's in store for me now.

*Behind the scenes* Wonderful ! Wonderful ! Before five nights are over the *ashoka* tree is covered with blossoms. Let me inform the queen. *Malavika and Bakulabalika are delighted.*

BAK. Friend, don't be frightened. The queen is true to her word.

MAL. Then let us follow the garden-keeper.

BAK. Very well.

*Exeunt all.*

END OF ACT IV.

## ACT V.

Queen Dharini invites the king to the pleasure-garden to see and admire the ashoka blossoms, the result of Malavika's kick. Going there with the Jester he finds the queen coming with Malavika arrayed in bridal dress and learns that Vidarbha has been overrun by his forces, Madhavasena released and that Malavika is Madhavasena's sister. He also listens to the story of the miraculous escape of Malavika and Kaushiki from the hands of robbers after the death of Kaushiki's brother minister Sumati of Vidarbha. News also comes of the safe return of the sacrificial horse, an achievement for which great credit is due to Prince Vasumitra. Queen Dharini herself gives Malavika in marriage with the king to the astonishment of all.

*Enter the garden-keeper* MADHUKARIKA.

MAD. I have performed the rites duly, made the base of the ashoka tree spick and span, let me inform the queen now. *Advancing.* Ah, fate favours Malavika! The queen has been angry with her, the tree has blossomed, the queen will be kind to her. Where shall I find the queen? *Seeing.* Let me ask this humpback, a trusted servant of the queen, carrying a sealed trunk and coming out of the courtyard.

*Enter a humpback,* SARSIKA.

MAD. Sarasika, where are you going?

SAR. Madhukarika, to distribute the monthly fees to learned brahmanas.





MAD. Why?

SAR. From the day that Her Majesty's son Vasumitra had been placed in charge of the sacrificial horse, the queen has been bestowing 800 gold coins as gifts to insure his long life.

MAD. Where is the queen now and what is she doing?

SAR. Seated in the cloister she is having her brother's letter read out to her.

MAD. What is the news from Vidarbha?

SAR. The country of Vidarbha has been subdued by our general Veerena. Madhavasana has been set free. The king of Vidarbha has sent with messengers priceless gems, draught animals, craftsmen and girls, as presents,

HERE ENDS THE INTERLUDE.

*Enter Janitor.*

JAN. I have been ordered thus by the queen now engaged in worshipping the *ashoka* tree, "Tell His Majesty, I would like very much to have along with him a look at the beauty of the flowers of the *ashoka* tree." The king is now seated on the judgment-seat. Let me wait for him there. *Advances.*

*Behind the scenes, songs of birds.*

FIRST BARD. Our king has subdued all foes.

Cupid makes the cuckoos to sing in spring in  
our gardens here,  
Trees in Vidarbha on Varada's banks are bent by  
your tuskens tied there.

SEC. BARD. O god-like king! your men have robbed  
Vidarbha's king of his glory,  
Its fame's spread all o'er in Vidarbha like  
Krishna's when he stole Rukmini.

JAN. This music indicates that the king is leaving the assembly. Let me take my stand behind the door. *Stands in a corner.*

*Enter KING with JESTER.*

KING. Like rain-water falling on a lotus standing in sun, see,  
Joy at victory, grief for not getting Malavika, mix in me.

JESTER. So far as I can see you will be supremely happy.

KING. How?

JESTER. I heard the queen tell Kaushiki, "Madam, you are proud of your skill as a beauty specialist. Now help Malavika to put on her bridal dress." Perhaps the queen is going to comply with your wishes.

KING. Friend, knowing well how keen the queen is in promoting my happiness, this seems to be quite likely.

JAN. Hail to your Majesty! The queen says that the *ashoka* tree has blossomed and she would like to see the beauty of the flowers with you.

KING. Is she gone there?

JAN. Certainly. After distributing largesses to her companions and attendants she is waiting there with Malavika and a handful of her attendants.

KING. *Looking joyfully at Jester.* Jayasena, you go ahead of us.

JAN. Come sire. *They advance.*

JESTER. *Looking.* O friend, Cupid rejuvenated is seen in the garden in all his glory!

KING. Quite right, friend.

Mango blossoms and *kurubakas* adorn the garden,  
Agitate my mind the ripe youth of spring season.

JESTER. See, how the *ashoka* tree is decked with clusters of flowers.

KING. Good thing the tree did not blossom so long,  
For now pretty flowers on it do throng.

JESTER. You are right. The queen comes with Malavika here.

KING. Friend, what am I to do now?

JESTER. Don't get agitated. Dharini has brought Malavika with her, though we are here.

KING. *Joyfully.* Look, friend,

To greet me with shy Malavika behind comes queen

with outstretched hands,

Looks like regal glory following earth as for me she stands.

*Enter DHARINI, MALAVIKA, KAUSHIKI and ATTENDANTS.*

MAL. *Aside.* I know why I have been dressed in this fashion by the queen, yet I tremble like water inside a lotus. But why does my left eye quiver?

JESTER. Friend, she certainly looks particularly beautiful in her bridal dress.

KING. Yes, I see that.

In becoming silk robe dressed Malavika with ornaments

likewise,

Looks like cloudless starry *chaitra* eve when moon is

about to rise.

QUEEN. *Approaching.* Hail to the king!

JESTER. Hearty greetings to you, madam!

KAU. Hail to your Majesty!

KING. Madam, I salute you.

KAU. May your wishes be fulfilled!

QUEEN *Smiling.* My lord, we have hit upon this corner as your trysting place with this young girl we have brought.

JESTER. *Blushing, going towards ashoka tree.* Friend,

Dharini could have made this *ashoka* tree flower,

Friend, now spring through flowers does you honour.

JESTER. Now calmly have a look at the young fair.

QUEEN. At whom?

JESTER. At the beauty of the blossoms of this red *ashoka* tree. *All sit down.*

KING. *Looking at Malavika, aside.* Near and yet far. O the woe! How agonising is such separation!



We are like a pair of *chakravakas*, queen is like night,  
Till she sanctions there is no hope for us to unite.

*Enter CHAMBERLAIN.*

CHAM. Hail to the king ! The minister states that the two female artisans sent by the king of Vidarbha fell ill due to the fatigue of the long journey so they were not brought earlier. They have rested, got over their fatigue and are now fit to appear before your Majesty. The minister awaits your Majesty's order.

KING. Bring them here.

CHAM. As your Majesty pleases.

CHAMBERLAIN *departs, re-enters with* JYOTSNKIA and  
MADANIKA, two girls from Vidarbha.

CHAM. This way, this way, girls.

JYOT. *In whispers.* Malavika, how lovely is this palace !  
It is a delight to get in here.

MADAN. Jyotsnika, I feel so too. Heart can indicate future felicity or misery.

JYOT. May that be true.

CHAM. There you find the king seated, accompanied by the queen. Go near them. *They go near, seeing Malavika and Kriushiki the two girls look at each other, salute them.*

BOTH. Hail to you, O king ! Hail to you, O queen !

KING. Sit down. *Both sit down under king's order.* In what art are you skilled in ?

BOTH. In music, your Majesty.

KING. Madam, have one in your service.

QUEEN. Malavika, whom would you like to have as your companion in music ?

BOTH. *Looking at Malavika.* O Princess ! *Bowing.* Hail to the Princess ! *Both shed tears. All look amazed.*

KING. Who are you both ? And who is she ?

BOTH. She is the daughter of our king.

KING. What ?

BOTH. Listen, king. You defeated the king of Vidarbha with your forces and set free prince Madhavasena. She is his younger sister, named Malavika.

QUEEN. Is she then a king's daughter ? I have used sandal-wood as slippers !

KING. How did she come to this state ?

MAL. *Sighing, aside.* Such is the dispensation of Providence !

MADAN. Listen, O king, Madhavasena fell into the hands of his kinsmen, his minister revered prince Sumati leaving behind servants like us ran away with the princess.

KING. I have heard of this before. What happened then ?

MADAN. My lord, I can't say what happened after that.

KAU. This unfortunate person can say.

BOTH. Princess, we hear the voice of Kaushiki.

MAL. It is she.

BOTH. Alas ! In an ascetic's robe revered Kaushiki leads a miserable life. Madam, we bow to you.

KAU. May you be happy !

KING. Are they related to you, worshipful lady ?

KAU. Yes, they are.

JESTER. Then give us the whole story of Malvika, madam.

KAU. *In feeble tone.* Prince Madhavasena's minister Sumati was my elder brother.

KING. That I have followed. What next ?

KAU. *Sadly.* When Malavika's brother was imprisoned by Vidarbha's king Sumati joined a caravan of merchants and was on his way here to bestow her on you as promised.

KING. Then, then.

KAU. Then the merchants entered a dense forest and along with them he was resting when all of a sudden—

KING. What next ? What next ?

KAU. What shall I say ? Then a gang of robbers appeared in sight. They were armed with bows, had quivers full of arrows, and their yells were horrid. *Malavika looks terrified.*

JESTER. Madam, need not be afraid. Madam is talking of past events.

KING. Then, then.

KAU. The merchant's guards were quickly overpowered by the robbers.

KING. O woe ! I have to listen to a yet more painful story !

KAU. To save Malavika, frightened by such attack, my brother Sumati laid down his life and thus repaid the debt he owed to his master.

MADAN. Alas, Sumati is not alive then ?

JYOT. That is why the princess has been reduced to such a state ! *Kaushiki sheds tears.*

KING. Madam, such is the state of our transient life in this world ! Don't grieve. Blessed is his life by such noble death.

• • KAU. Then I fainted. When I recovered consciousness I could find Malavika no more.

KING. She must have had a terrible time.

KAU. Then I had my brother's body cremated. That renewed my grief. At last I somehow managed to escape to your country and I put on red brown garment.

KING. Right path for a virtuous person.

KAU. This is Malavika who from the forest got into Veerasena's hands, then into the queen's. Coming to the queen's household subsequently I met her here. That finishes the whole story.

MAL. *To herself.* What will the king now say ?

KING. Alas ! Fate sometimes heaps calamities on one.  
For,

Silken robe for bathing so I have used,  
Princess Malavika as a servant have abused.

QUEEN. Madam, you have done an improper act in not disclosing that Malavika is of noble birth.

KAU. Heaven forbid ! I was silent for a definite reason.

QUEEN. What was that ?

KAU. A fortune-teller, out on a pilgrimage, once told her father, in my presence, "this girl will have to serve for a year as a servant before she gets married". As she was serving a king like you I was waiting for the fulfilment of the prophecy, so I think I have acted wisely.

KING. You did right in waiting.

CHAM. Your Majesty, I am forced to interfere in the midst of your conversation. The minister reports that your Majesty's orders have been carried out so far as the settlement of affairs in Vidarbha is concerned and he awaits further orders, if any.

KING. Maudgalya, I want to divide the kingdom of Vidarbha between Yagnasena and Madhavasena.

As sun and moon light, day and night and time divide.

So let two brothers rule stream Varada's either side.

CHAM. Let me communicate your Majesty's wishes to the Council of ministers. *King signifies his assent by movement of fingers. Exit Chamberlain.*

JYOT. Princess, our king is re-instated in half his kingdom.

MAL. He ought to be thankful that his life has been spared.

*Re-enter CHAMBERLAIN.*

CHAM. Hail to your Majesty ! Sire, the minister says that the Council approves of your Majesty's suggestion. It accords with their views. As a pair of horses obeys the

charioteer and pulls a chariot evenly, so the brothers will rule over their separate kingdoms under your Majesty's supervision free from strife.

KING. Tell the Council to write to our general Veerasena to act accordingly.

CHAM. As your Majesty pleases. *Exit Chamberlain.*

*Re-enter CHAMBERLAIN with a letter and presents.*

CHAM. Your Majesty's orders have been carried out. Here is a letter wrapt in a scarf from your Majesty's general Pushpamitra. Your Majesty be pleased to have a look at it. *The king getting up respectfully accepts the scarf and hands over the letter to attendants, they read it.*

QUEEN. *To herself.* My mind is drawn towards that letter. After the news of my elders when shall I have news of my son Vasumitra? He has been engaged in an arduous task by the general.

KING. *Reads the letter.* "Hail to you! From the sacrificial shed general Pushpamitra stretches lovingly his arms to embrace his son Agnimitra. May he live long! He also informs his son that under the charge of Prince Vasumitra, and there are a hundred other princes with him, the sacrificial horse has been let go with instructions to return within a year. The horse went as far as the banks of the Indus and was there seized by Yavanas and a fierce fight arose". *Queen Dharini turns pale.*

KING. That was serious. *Reads on.* "Then the invincible warrior Vasumitra drove all the Yavanas away and brought the horse, forcibly seized, back home safely".

QUEEN. That cheers my heart.

KING. *Reading towards end.* As the horse of Sagara of the solar line of kings was stolen but was recovered by his grandson Amshumana and thus the sacrifice completed, so I shall complete the sacrifice with the help of Vasumitra. You

need not, therefore, be angry with the Yavanas but you would come and attend the sacrifice. I would feel grateful."

KAU. Your son has luckily brought prosperity on you both. You, madam, occupy now the enviable position of the wife of a hero and have become the mother of a hero also.

QUEEN. Madam, I am glad my son is following his father's footsteps.

KING. Maudgalya, the young tusker is following in the footsteps of the lord of tuskers.

CHAM. We are not surprised prince with horse has returned,  
For submarine fire sea's water has burned  
As it has out of thigh of a sage moved,  
So no wonder your son hero has proved.

KING. Chamberlain, release Yagnasena's brother-in-law and others from prison.

CHAM. As your Majesty pleases. *Exit Chamberlain.*

QUEEN. Yagnasena

JAN. Madam.

QUEEN. Convey to Iravati and other ladies this news of the victory of our son. *Janitor about to go.* Listen.

JAN. Madam.

QUEEN. *In whispers.* Remind Iravati of my promise to Malavika that if the *ashoka* tree blossomed I would fulfil her desire and also tell her of Malavika's noble lineage and request her not to stand in the way of my carrying out that promise.

JAN. As your Majesty pleases. *Janitor goes out but re-enters.* Your Majesty, the ladies have presented me with so many clothes and ornaments that I have become a veritable trunk.

QUEEN. It is no wonder. Son's victory has caused universal joy.

JAN. *In whispers.* Your Majesty, Iravati says you are

patient like the earth. You have absolute authority in all matters so must not waver from your resolution.

QUEEN. Madam, if you have no objection I would like to carry out the wishes of minister Sumati by giving Malavika in marriage with the king.

KAU. You have yet full control over her.

QUEEN. *Holding Malavika by hand.* My lord, as you have conveyed to me the joyous tidings of my son's victory, so I give you a fitting reward. *King feels shy.*

QUEEN. *Smiling.* Doesn't my lord accede to my wishes?

JESTER. Queen, there is a saying current that a young bridegroom always feels shy. *King stares at Jester as if wrathfully.* You need not hesitate when the queen herself styles Malavika as 'Madam' and makes a love-offering to you.

QUEEN. She is a princess by birth so she is entitled to that appellation.

KAU. Oh, no.

Best of gems shines brightest when set in gold.

So accomplished Malavika when on king bestowed.

QUEEN. *Remembering.* Pardon me, madam, I have forgotten one thing in this festival. Jayasena, go, get a silk scarf.

JAN. As your Majesty pleases. *Goes out and re-enters with silk scarf.* Madam, here it is.

QUEEN. *Throwing a veil over Malavika's head.* O lord! Accept her.

KING. I have ever been obedient to your command. *In whispers.* I accept her.

JESTER. How well-disposed is the queen towards the king. *Queen looks at attendants.*

ATTENDANTS. *Approaching Malavika.* Madam, may you live long. *Queen looks at Kaushiki.*

KAU. Madam !

At your deed we do not wonder,  
Carries ever a big river  
To sea affluent streams' water,  
Loving, chaste wives husbands please e'er.

*Enter NIPUNIKA.*

NIP. Hail to your Majesty ! Iravati says that by overstepping the rules of decorum she offended the king that day but ever since she has bowed to his commands. Now that his wishes are fulfilled she would be glad if he would graciously retain a high opinion about her.

QUEEN. Of course the request of your mistress the king will come to know, Nipupika,

NIP. I am much obliged. *Exit Nipunika.*

KAU. By this alliance Madhavasena is honoured, I would like to go and congratulate him.

QUEEN. You must not leave us.

KING. Madam, I shall mention your congratulations in my letter to him.

KAU. I know the great love you both bear to me.

QUEEN. My lord, say what else I can do for you ?

KING. Queen, nothing can be so dear to me as this.

*Words of the Actor.*

Be kind to me ever,  
May grief ne'er cross your path,  
May my people suffer  
Ne'er from floods, droughts, on earth.

*Exeunt all.*

END OF ACT V.



## GLOSSARY.

*Aditi.* The wife of Kashyapa. In the Rig Veda X 72 she is described as the mother of the gods. Vishnu when born as a dwarf to curb Bali was born as the son of Kashyapa and Aditi. She is sometimes identified with all creation.

*Ahalya.* A nymph, wife of Gautama or Saradvat, was changed into stone by her husband's curse but redeemed from it by touch of Rama's feet.

*Airavata.* Indra's elephant and the guardian elephant of the eastern quarter, came out of the ocean when it was churned. It is white in colour and has four tusks.

*Amshumana.* Grandson of Sagara (q. v).

*Anjana.* Courted by Vayu or Wind god, mother of Hanumana.

*Apsaras.* Celestial nymphs who came out of the sea while it was churned. According to the Ramayana they are several millions in number. The Atharva Veda says that they are the wives of *gandharvas*. They serve the gods in heaven.

*Apsarastirtha.* Name of a mythical lake, or of a flight of steps which celestial nymphs used while going to bathe in the Ganges.

*Arka.* *Calotropis gigantea*, the sun plant, also called swallow wort.

*Arina.* Dawn personified as the charioteer of heaven, he is represented as a handsome youth without legs.

*Ashoka Saraca Indica*, a tree with splendid flowers of orange, pink or scarlet colour. Poets say that if the tree be kicked by a pretty woman it flowers. See Birth of Kumara III 22, Malavika and Agnimitra Act IV.

*Atimuta.* *Gaertnera racemosa*, the Madhavi creeper.

*Attri.* One of the seven ages, said to have sprung from Brahma's eye, father of Durvasa, family priest of the Yadus, Purus.

*Bakula.* *Mimusops elengi*, also called keshara, a sweet-scented flower, the bark of the tree yields tannic acid. Poets fancy that the tree blossoms on being sprinkled with wine by young women from their mouths.

*Bharata*. A learned sage, the first to frame rules on rhetoric and prosody. Also, son of Dushyanta and Shakuntala, emperor of India, married three daughters of king of Vidarbha, patron of Bharadvaga. He gave India the name of Bharatavarsha.

*Bimba*. *Momordica monodelpha*, a fruit of scarlet colour when ripe.

*Brahma*. The Creator; the three gods Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver and Shiva the Destroyer, are really one and are but the manifestations of the ultimate essence or supreme God from whom all things have sprung.

*Brahmana*. The highest of the four castes of India, supposed to have sprung out of the Creator's mouth. Manu says a brahmana's duties are, reading, teaching, worship, officiating at sacrifices, giving and taking of gifts.

*Budha*. The planet Mercury.

*Chaitra*. The month corresponding to March-April.

*Chakravaka* *Canarca rutila*, called Ruddy Shell Drake, or 'Red goose'. Tradition says that the male and the female birds spend their time together during the day but part at dusk and call to each other in piteous cries.

*Champak*. *Michelia champaka*, one of the five arrows of Cupid is made of this flower.

*Chataka*. *Iora typhia* (with other varieties), supposed to drink rainwater only.

*Chhalika*. Light dance music, often accompanied with gesticulations.

*Chitra*. The star *spica virginis*, the fourteenth lunar mansion, the conjunction with the moon takes place in March-April.

*Chitraratha*. King of the *gandharvas*, son of Kashyapa, grandson by daughter of Daksha.

*Chyavana*. Son of sage Bhrigu and Puloma, performed rigid penance, married the daughter of a king.

*Dakshayana*. Same as Aditi.

*Durva*. *Panicum dactylon*, a species of grass, regarded as sacred and used in worship, said to have sprung from the thigh of Vishnu.

*Durvasa*. An irascible ascetic who reduced his own wife to ashes by a curse, also cursed Shakuntala and the god Indra.

*Dushyanta.* A king of the Puru line, son of Aiti, husband of Shakuntala, father of Bharata after whom India was named Bharatavarsha.

*Gandhamadana.* A mountain in Kailasa to the south of Sumeru mount, with four gardens Nandana, Vaibhraga and two others and dense forests. It is frequented by the gods, kinnaras, etc.

*Gandharva.* The most handsome of the denizens of heaven, they are the musicians and actors in the courts of the gods.

*Gandharva marriage.* One of the eight recognised forms of marriage being the outcome of affection between the parties and effected by their mutual consent, not requiring the sanction of the elders nor the performance of any religious ceremony.

*Garuda.* Son of Kashyapa and Vinata, king of birds, rests on Vishnu's standard.

*Gauri.* Parvati, daughter of Himalaya, wife of Shiva, mother of Kartikeya.

*Ghee.* Butter clarified by boiling.

*Gorachana.* Cow's gallstone, used as an ingredient for decoration by women, also for making writing material.

*Hari.* Same as Vishnu. In one incarnation he appeared as a dwarf before Bali who oppressed the gods and begged for three feet of ground. When his prayer was granted he grew to such enormous size that with one foot he covered the earth, with the other heaven and the third he placed on Bali's head with the result that he was sent down to the nether region.

*Harichandana.* Sandal tree, a favourite tree of Indra, one of the five celestial trees.

*Hemakuta.* A mountain to the north of the Himalaya described in the Mahabharata and in the Markandeya Purana: same as mount Kailasa.

*Hiranyapura.* A city of the demons suspended in the air, the demons Viratakavacha and Kalakeya lived here.

*Indra.* Chief of the Vedic gods and a mighty warrior. In classical Sanskrit literature he is found to have lost this eminent position. He enjoys the best of everything. His capital is at Amara-vati, his garden is called Nandana, charioteer is named Malati, while his elephant is the famous Airavata and chief weapon is thunder, each the pick of its kind.

*Indragopa.* Cochineal.

*Ipguli.* A certain kind of fruit from which oil is extracted which is used as a cure for cold and gout and was used by devotees for lighting lamps.

*Jambu.* *Eugenia* with numerous species.

*Jayanta.* Name of Indra's son.

*Kadamba.* *Nauclea kadamba*, also called nipa. The tree attains a height of 70 to 80 feet and bears orange coloured blossoms. It was the favourite tree of Krishna and its wine was liked by Balarama.

*Kailasa.* A peak of the Himalaya, also called Hemakuta, the abode of Kubera and the favourite haunt of Shiva. It is said to be made of crystals (diamonds?) and other costly gems. There is a mountain called Kailasa 25 miles to the north of lake Manasarovar to the north of Kashmir from which the Indus, the Sutlej and the Brahmaputra rise, the term has come to mean 'paradise.' It is extremely picturesque and majestic.

*Kalanemi.* Name of a demon, son of Hiranyakashipu, killed by Vishnu, also name of Ravana's maternal uncle, killed by Hanumana.

*Kalpu tree.* The celestial wishing-tree capable of yielding anything that is asked of it. It is made of gold, set with gems and produces ornaments. See Cloud Messenger II, 13.

*Kanva.* A descendant of Kashyapa. The Kanvas were learned sages, several members of the family composed hymns of the Rig Veda.

*Karnikara.* Name of a tree as also of its flower and fruit.

*Kartikeya.* Son of Shiva, commander of the celestial forces in the fight against the demon Taraka. See Birth of Kumara.

*Kashi.* Benares, the holiest of holy cities of India.

*Kashyapa.* Son of Brahma's son Marichi, husband of Aditi, father of gods, demons, men, fishes, reptiles, etc.

*Kaushika.* The reference in the text is to the family in which Vishvamitra was born.

*Keshara.* See Bakula.

*Keshava.* Same as Vishnu.

*Ketaka.* *Strychnos potatorum*, a fruit used in removing impurities from water, popularly called 'the clearing nut.'

**Kinnaras.** Musicians of heaven, their heads were like those of horses.

**Krishna.** Incarnation of Vishnu, born at Bhoja as son of Vasudeva and Devaki. He acted as Arjuna's charioteer during the Kurukshetra war and recited the Bhagavadgita just before the actual outbreak of the war.

**Kshatriya.** The second or the warrior caste.

**Kubera.** Son of Vishrava, grandson of Brahma, lord of wealth, first reigned in Lanka but for fear of Ravana fled to the Kailasa mountain.

**Kunda.** *Jasminum multiflorum*, jasmine flower, not used in the worship of Shiva, the term also refers to the lotus.

**Kurubaka.** Name of a tree and also of its flower (crimson amarant or purple Barleria).

**Kusha.** *Poa cynosuroides*. A kind of sacrificial grass, indispensable in the performance of Vedic rites.

**Lakshmi.** Shree, wife of Narayana, goddess of wealth, fortune, beauty, was born as Sita, the prettiest and the foremost of the goddesses.

**Mathavi.** *Gaer'nara racemosa*. A spring creeper.

**Malati.** *Jasminum grandiflorum*. A fragrant flower from which perfume is made.

**Malaya.** The Malaya range in Malabar in the western Ghats (southern part).

**Malini.** A river flowing from the Himalaya; on its bank close to the mountain was the hermitage of Kanva.

**Manasa lake.** 30°8' N. and 81°53' E., lies to the east of Kailasa hill. The Indus and the Brahmaputra rise from it. It is supposed to be of celestial origin. Wild swans repair to this lake in the breeding season at the beginning of the monsoon.

**Mandakini.** That part of the river Ganges which flows in heaven from Baikuntha to Brahmaloaka. Then the same stream comes down to the earth and ultimately descends to the nether region.

**Mandara.** *Erythrina Indica*, a celestial tree now found all over India. Its flowers yield red dye, trunk resin, bark fibre. Also, the name of a mount near Meru frequented by gods and used by them for churning the ocean.

*Man-lion.* An incarnation of Vishnu born in the world to kill the demon Hiranyakashipu, the father of Prahlada.

*Maricha.* The son of Marichi.

*Marichi.* Son of Brahma, father of Kashyapa, one of the seven saints.

*Matali.* Name of Indra's charioteer.

*Menaka.* Alarmed at the penance of Vishvamisra Indra sent the nymph Menaka to the ascetic. The plot succeeded and Shakuntala was born.

*Musta.* *Cyperus rotundus*, a medicinal herb.

*Naimisha forest.* A sacred forest where under Brahma's advice hermits took refuge in fear of Kali, probably situate on the banks of the Gomati.

*Nandana.* The garden of Indra near mount Sumeru.

*Narada.* Son of Brahma, seer, devotee of Vishnu, chief adviser of the gods in case of any difficulty, believed to be an adept in appeasing quarrels.

*Narayana.* Vishnu, the Redeemer.

*Nawamallika.* *Jasminum sambac*, double jasmine.

*Nipa.* Kadamba (q.v.).

*Parvati.* Daughter of Himalaya, wife of Shiva, same as Uma, see Birth of Kumara.

*Patala.* *Bignonia suave-olens* (?). Name of a tree and its flower.

*Pinakin.* Shiva who pursued the sacrifice performed by his father-in-law Daksha with the bow 'pinaka.'

*Pratishthana.* A city on the bank of the Ganges, capital of Pururava's dominion; also on the bank of the Godavari south of Aurangabad.

*Pravaha.* The second of the seven winds which sets the planets in motion. The heaven is divided into seven paths each assigned to a particular wind.

*Puru.* An ancient king of the Soma dynasty, son of Yayati, grandson of Nahusha, the name is mentioned in the Rig Veda. The lunar line of kings is descended from this stock.

*Pururava.* The founder and first king of the lunar race. The name is mentioned in the Rig Veda. His union with Urvashi is narrated in the Haribansha but the details of the story are entirely

different. Pururava and Urvashi as mentioned in the Rig Veda represent the sun and the dawn. He was the son of Budha, who was the son of the moon, who was the son of Attri, who again was the son of Brahma. His mother Ila was the daughter of the sun.

*Purushottama.* Vishnu.

*Rahu.* A demon who was secretly drinking nectar, the sun and the moon saw it and complained to Vishnu who cut off Rahu's head with his discus. The head is known as Rahu and the trunk Ketu. Incensed at their conduct Rahu devours the sun and the moon and thus causes the eclipse. Astronomically speaking, Rahu and Ketu represent the two nodes in the orbits of the sun and the moon.

*Rajarshi.* A king who is saintly in character.

*Rambha.* A pretty celestial nymph and an expert dancer.

*Rohini.* The most favourite of the 27 wives of the moon (the lunar mansions). The moon mostly spent his time with her, so the other wives complained to Daksha who cursed the moon, in consequence of which he was attacked with pthisis, hence his daily waning in the sky.

*Rukmini.* Wife of Krishna, daughter of Bhishmaka king of Kundina. See Death of Shishupala.

*Sagara.* A mythical king of Ayodhya of the solar race whose sons were burnt to ashes by the wrath of sage Kapila but whose wrath was appeased by Sagara's grandson Amshumana. Another descendant of Sagara, Bhagiratha, succeeded in restoring Sagara's sons to life by bringing the Ganges down from heaven.

*Saptaparna.* *Alstonia scholaris*, a tree.

*Sarasvati.* Daughter of Brahma, wife of Narayana, the goddess of learning. As to her birth see Brahma Vaivarta Purana; also the name of a river.

*Shachi.* Wife of Indra.

*Shakuntala.* Daughter of Menaka (q. v.). The story of her birth is given in the Mahabharata. (I. 68—74),

*Shallaki.* *Roswellia thurifera*, incense tree.

*Shami.* *Accacia suma*, also *prosopis spicigera*, firewood from which by friction fire was kindled.

*Sharmishtha.* The favourite wife of king Yayati being preferred to her co-wife Devayani, see Mahabharata (I). She is the daughter of a

demon king Brishaparva and mother of Puru. She was highly proficient in dancing and music and composed a few musical pieces.

*Shastras.* Sacred books of the Hindus embracing all branches of learning, legal, medical, religious, etc. They are said to constitute the eyes of the learned as they enable one to see what would otherwise remain invisible, remove doubts and sharpen the intellect. He who has no knowledge of them may be said to be blind.

*Shesha.* The serpent on whose hood rest Vishnu and Lakshmi at the end of each cycle after the total annihilation of the world.

*Shiva.* The same as Rudra of the Vedas. He is the great Destroyer. Ordinarily he is clad in tiger-skin, has a third eye as also the moon on his forehead. He reduced Cupid to ashes. See Birth of Kumara III, Shivapurana.

*Sirisa.* *Accacia sirissa*, a tree and its flower.

*Somathirtha.* Also called Prabhasa. A place of pilgrimage in Kenara near temple of Somnath and near Vidura and Pindapuri. See Varahapurana. The moon performed penance here and was cured of consumption.

*Surabhikandara.* Name of a mountain.

*Svayamvara.* Self-choice of her husband by a maiden from among assembled suitors.

*Tila.* *Sesamum indicum*, oil is extracted from it. Pliny says it used to be exported to Europe from India.

*Tilaka.* Auspicious mark put on the forehead and parts of the body.

*Trishanku.* A king of the solar race who wanted to go to heaven in his mortal frame. Vishvamitra managed to send him to heaven, see Ramayana (I). but Indra sent him back and he had to rest midway between the heaven and earth for some time.

*Upanishads.* The concluding portion of the Vedas dealing with theological and philosophical speculations about the individual soul and the world soul or universal soul and with the absorption of the former with the latter. They form the groundwork of the later philosophical systems of the Hindus. They do not regard the ritual observances or the correct performance of sacrifices, as laid down in the Brahmanas, to be the sole means of salvation. On the other hand, they prescribe that salvation can be obtained only by correct



knowledge, i. e. by the realisation of the identity of the individual with the world soul as summed up in the formula, "that (world soul) thou (individual soul) art",

*Urvashi*. A pretty celestial nymph born from the thigh of Vishnu.

*Varada*. A river issuing from the Himalaya ; also a tributary of the Tungabhadra, also river Wardah in Central Provinces.

*Varuni*. Goddess of liquor, daughter of Varuna produced at the churning of the ocean.

*Vedic*. Pertaining to the Vedas, the sacred books of the Hindus and the ultimate source of their religion, laws, etc. The Vedas are the earliest extant record of the thoughts of the Indo-European Aryans.

*Vidarbha*. By some identified with modern Berar.

*Vidisha*. Modern Bhilsa in Central India, 26 miles to the N. E. of Bhopal on the bank of the Betwa.

*Vishakha*. Kartikeya, also the sixteenth lunar asterism.

*Vishnu*. God regarded as the Preserver who became incarnate in various forms to punish the wicked. In one such incarnation he tricked Bali by appearing as a dwarf before him, see *Hari*. 'Man-lion' was another of his incarnations.

*Vridhashakalya*. Shakalya the elder, a sage.

*Yakshas*. Ugly deformed creatures but good singers, followers of Kubera.

*Yavanas*. The term is applied to the Ionians and the Bactro-Greeks, to the inhabitants of Yunan and also to those of Arabia and of trans Sutlej territories.

*Yavani*. A female Yavana.

*Yayati*. Son of Nahusha, founder of the Puru line of kings, father of Puru.

*Yuthica*. *Jasminum auriculatum*, a fragrant flower.

THE END.

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